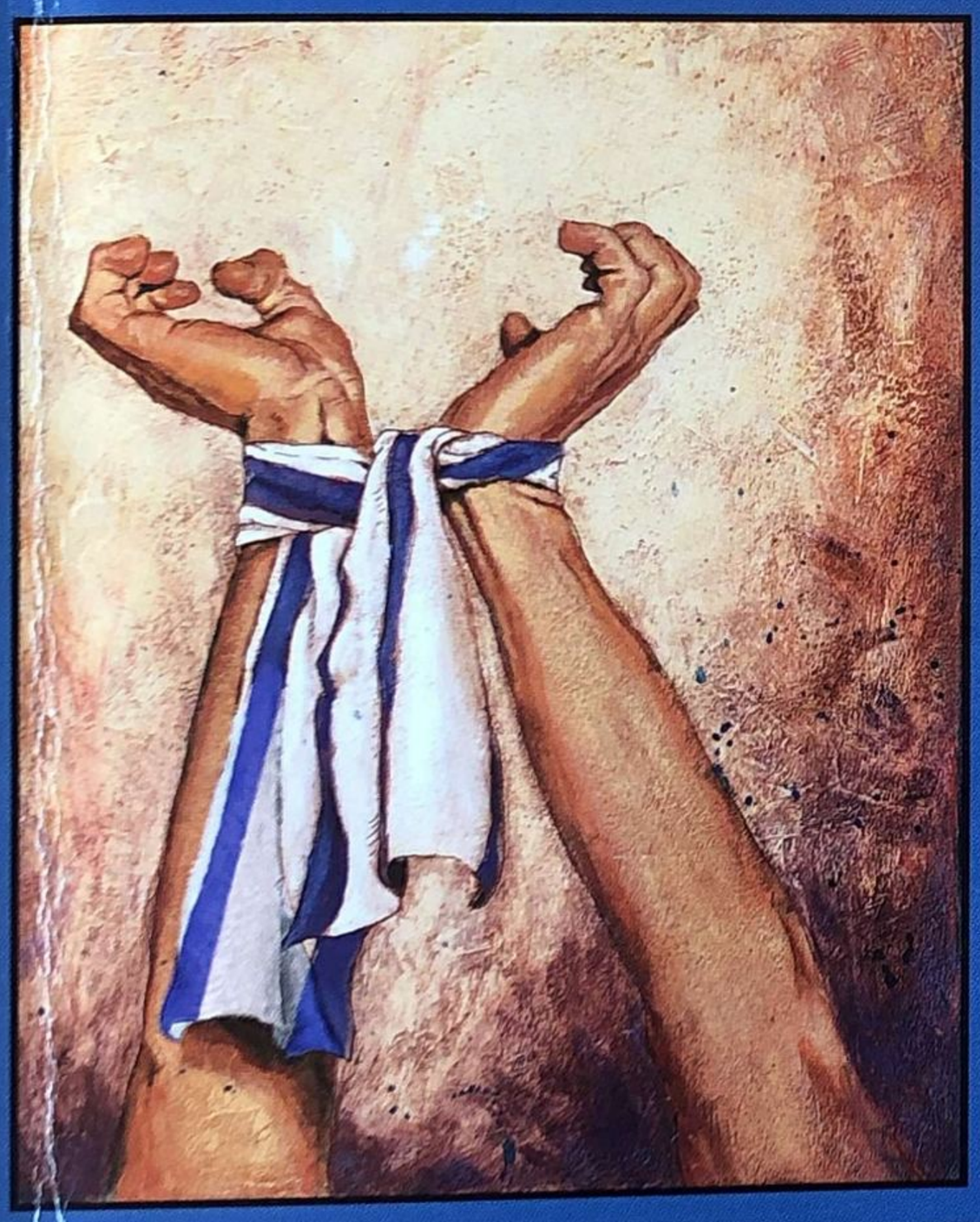
(te•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

Politics of Meaning
Twelve Points of Unity

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JULY/AUGUST 1996 $6.00



LABOR'S LOVE LOST
Peace After Peres?

Wendy Orange
Noga Tarnopolsky
Martin J. Gidron

Meaning Matters
An Ethics Summit Sampler

John J. Sweeney ❀ Marian Wright Edelman
Torie Osborn ❀ Harvey Cox ❀ Eric Yoffie
Cherie R. Brown ❀ Jyl Lynn Felman ❀ and more

PLUS

Steven E. Aschheim on Goldhagen's Germans
Arlene Goldbard on Foundations' Failings

08 > 64858 0 306775 8

The Synagogue in Oil City, Pennsylvania

The congregation disappears one by one
into another service underground or on top
of the air where there is no trouble

making a *minyan* like there is here
in this temple above the Allegheny River
and a block from where, less and less,

tankers rattle over the Petroleum Bridge,
carrying their crude. Orthodox,
not allowed to use the phone on this day

of rest, have Frank, the gentile neighbor
with the orange hunting jacket, call up
any Jews still left because you need

at least ten so that each prays
for the entire and not only for the self.
During the Torah portion no longer

the sound of drills, the derricks pumping,
but now the quiet grows with each responsive
chanting, each loss making a little more room

to be filled in by a mysterious God.
The names on the scroll of the dead outnumber
the names called to read from the Book

or carry it on their shoulders around
the tabernacle, singing in the Sabbath.
So many injunctions to lift over their bodies.

The children left with the economy
and will not return. These are the last
generation in a town with no Rabbi,

who took a better job. And who can blame him,
not wanting to be the one to bury them all,
these final chosen to keep the word here,

where they gather out of habit or a faint
calling in the blood like those birds
who return to the same place the same time

to sing together in their sanctuary
until it is filled, like this town
after the refinery closes, with silence.

—Philip Terman

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A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE, & SOCIETY

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PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & EDUCATION

Dear TIKKUN Subscribers:

Since you're probably puzzling over the arrival of this second copy of your July/August issue of TIKKUN, we wanted to let you know why you've gotten it. The first copy you received had a serious printing error on the back cover. Unfortunately, although our printer agreed to make good on its mistake, subscribers' copies had already been mailed. You may want to give that copy to a neighbor or friend; apologize for the error and call their attention to articles that they might find intriguing. As always, we are delighted to hear your comments on the editorials and articles in this issue.

As TIKKUN heads toward its tenth anniversary celebration, we think you'll find our voices and perspectives on politics, culture, and society more valuable and rewarding than ever. Many Israeli peace activists have told us how glad they are that they can count on us to convey to American Jews the complexities the peace movement faces in the post-election period. Similarly, many social change activists continue to delight in TIKKUN's sane alternative to the mainstream media's latest absurdities and cynicism.

Please accept this new, improved July/August issue of TIKKUN with best wishes for a restful, rejuvenating summer. And wherever your vacation plans lead you, be sure to take along TIKKUN and my new book, *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism.*

Sincerely,

Michael Lerner
Editor and Publisher

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4

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Inside Front Cover:
Philip Terman
The Synagogue in Oil City, Pennsylvania

Cover art: "The Plight of Cuba," by Jeff Bohlander, digitally altered by Eric Goldhagen to address the current plight of Israel.

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Letters

FREUD FLAP

To the Editor:

Michael S. Roth's article about the postponed, now rescheduled Freud exhibit ("The Freud Flap," March/April 1996) contains a good deal of disinformation, including a "quotation" from me that Roth has cynically doctored to reverse the meaning of my words. "'Scrap the whole exhibit,' Crews said." What I actually told Daniel Zalewski, whose article in the November/December 1995 issue of *Lingua Franca* can be recommended as a foil to Roth's Orwellian history, was this: "The only helpful thing that Freud scholars can do right now is to ask the Library of Congress to scrap everything and *start from scratch*." Not cancellation, not censorship, but reconstitution on a broader basis than the exclusively partisan one originally announced.

One couldn't guess from Roth's article why fifty people—most of them respected Freud scholars, some of them psychoanalysts, one of them Freud's own granddaughter—had petitioned the Library for the incorporation of critical perspectives in the exhibit.

Zalewski's article gave the true picture. He pointed out, for example, that Harold Blum, director of the Freud Archives and the originator of the show, is "a doctrinaire analyst" who launches partisan apologetics in behalf of what Blum persists in calling "the enduring discoveries of [Freud's] revolutionary genius." And he added:

> Further raising suspicions, the exhibit's advisory committee was hand-picked from scholars hewing closely to the Freudian line.... Some of the 'exhibition consultants' aren't scholars at all but practicing analysts. Most troubling, no prominent (or obscure) revisionists of Freudian orthodoxy were in-

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vited to contribute to the exhibit catalogue....

Should the excluded scholars now be faulted for not having waited patiently, as Roth suggests, to see how such a show would turn out? And if it should eventually prove more balanced than they expected, won't that be precisely because they dared to blow the whistle in time? Roth himself apparently thinks so; in October 1995 he sent us all a letter saying, "Your petition alerted me to the dangers that the exhibit may unwittingly contain a partisan defense of Freud, or that we might not have paid sufficient attention to the recent historical and philosophical critiques of psychoanalysis."

Roth's vilification of me is particularly unsavory in view of the constructive help I provided him when, in his damage-control mode, he phoned me last summer for advice. Finding to my amazement that he was unacquainted with critical Freud scholarship, I proposed that he start by reading some key essays by philosopher Frank Cioffi, of whom he had never heard. I gave him the relevant citations as well as Cioffi's address. An essay subsequently submitted by Cioffi has been accepted for the catalogue—a fact that Roth has been citing as evidence of his receptivity to critical viewpoints from the outset.

I also politely told Roth that independent Freud scholars would probably not be placated by an idea he tried out on me: incorporating a videotaped discussion among a few critics as an exhibit item in its own right. What the petitioners are asking, I explained, is not that they be placed on view, but that their findings about the historical Freud be taken seriously. Roth accepted the reasonableness of the point, but replied that his freedom of action as curator was limited by "certain constraints" that he didn't feel at liberty to spell out.

In recent months, Roth has been trying to give a more eclectic cast to the exhibit. I applaud the effort, and only regret that he now chooses to slander those who have nudged him in this prudent direction. Unfortunately, he still serves at the behest of the sclerotic Freud establishment, which will not countenance any serious challenge to the legendary gospel according to Ernest Jones and Peter Gay. Perhaps this continuing tension accounts for the combination of moral pomposity,

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You don't have to be a student, or be in your twenties...to intern at TIKKUN.

Many people who are taking off time to consider a new job or career, or who are interested in a career in editing, writing, or publishing and want to begin making professional connections or who have been raising a family, or workplace retirees or returnees who want to make a significant contribution, become interns at TIKKUN. We seek a minimum commitment of sixteen hours per week. Basic computer skills are a must. While we can offer no material incentive (though it is true that we do much of our hiring from people who have previously been interns), we can offer you an opportunity to make a significant contribution to America's national dialogue, to the building of a progressive politics of meaning community, and/or to the building of Jewish renewal. We offer two tracks: one primarily focused on work related to the editing and publishing of the magazine, the other primarily focused on educational and community organizing work in spreading the word about the politics of meaning. Interns may work either at our office in New York or at our office in the San Francisco Bay Area (let us know which you are applying for).

To apply: Send a self-revealing letter to Interns, c/o TIKKUN, 251 W. 100th St., New York, NY 10025.

personal spite, and outright untruth manifested in Roth's TIKKUN essay.

Frederick Crews
Berkeley, California

Michael S. Roth responds:

I was grateful for the generous suggestions made by Frederick Crews in regard to those who might contribute independent and critical perspectives on Freud for the Library of Congress exhibition. Afterwards, it seemed to me that his position changed from wanting to make constructive suggestions about critical participation to one of straightforward opposition to the planning process of the exhibit. Moreover, I felt his unfounded accusations about the advisory committee (no more true when repeated in *Lingua Franca* or in a letter to The *New York Times*) deserved a response.

Professor Crews has told me he thought I was a tool of the Freud establishment (which he nicely calls "sclerotic"), and I have told him that whoever might make up this establishment, it was not controlling the exhibition. I have been pleased that we have had several critical and independent thinkers participating in the exhibition's planning and writing for the catalogue, and that we have added still others (some of whom originally signed the petition to which Crews refers).

Crews thinks that "asking the Library of Congress to scrap everything and start from scratch" in regard to an exhibition that was still in the early planning stages was not a call for censorship. Though he assures me that I am wrong, it did seem like an attempt at censorship to me. I remain concerned that efforts to pressure institutions to halt the planning of cultural productions, even if they are urged to "start from scratch," will continue to have a chilling effect on creative work in our country.

ORTHODOX JUDAISM

To the Editor:

Mayer Schiller's articulation of an Orthodox perspective on non-Orthodox Jews ("We Are Not Alone," March/ April 1996) is the finest piece on the subject I have yet seen. He has done a service to all of Jewry by shedding light where previously there has been much heat.

This article serves a bilateral function: to show how Mayer Schiller (and most Orthodox Jews I know) look at the rest of Jewry, and to reveal how we look at ourselves. Popular misconceptions of the latter have had unfortunate consequences. Some (not all) non-Orthodox Jews simply refuse to take our faith in a Halakha received at Sinai seriously. Either we really don't mean it, or we really do and are to be condemned for it. Thus, our commitment to Shabbat, *tzitzit*, and thrice-daily prayer is "religious," whereas our seeking out the same Halakhic system for instruction in conversions, personal status, interdenominational cooperation, etc., is supposedly a cynical or political manipulation.

Schiller's distinction between objective and subjective standards of divine judgment is lucid. It is evident in the laws regarding "love of the Jewish people" (especially *Tanya*, chap. 32) that the tight conditions surrounding the commandment of rebuke, in addition to the virtual consensus of Halakhic authorities that the disregard for halakhic observance by the masses of Jewry today must be judged leniently.

I believe that Schiller's position is the best our tradition can produce. To one who still finds it insulting: Sorry, we cannot discard our faith to please everyone. To those who appreciate it: I can only say *shalom aleichem*.

Steven Silberman
Princeton, New Jersey

FORGIVENESS

To the Editor:

Berel Lang's piece on forgiveness ("The Holocaust and Two Views of Forgiveness," March/April 1996) was superbly thought-provoking. His discussion of forgiving someone who admits no wrong seems to equate *forgiving* an action with *condoning* it. They're not the same, though black-and-white thinking suggests otherwise. If a beloved ten-year-old nephew of mine steals a dollar from me, I haven't let him off the hook entirely if I convey to him, "Listen here, you've done something wrong, and I hope you can see that and apologize for it; but I honor you in any case, and I forgive you in any case."

It's far easier to forgive him if he's sincerely remorseful. But ease of forgiveness is a somewhat different issue from the desirability of forgiveness. It's also easier if the perpetrator is young, the offense light, and the affection strong. If my *twenty*-year-old nephew steals $1,000 from me, or threatens me with a knife, an act of forgiveness becomes more difficult. All the more so if it's a stranger, not my dear nephew. But in any case, it would not condone the action, whether in these relatively trivial examples or in extreme cases of murder and genocide.

Mystical religious tradition lends its own noteworthy contribution to this discussion. A disciple of the eighteenth-century Hasidic rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg asked him, "If I see a man who is wicked before God, how can I love him?" "Don't you know," said Rabbi Shmelke, "that the original soul came out of the essence of God, and that every human soul is a part of God? And will you have no mercy on him, when you see that one of his holy sparks has been lost in a maze, and is almost stifled?"

How often do we truly see the other as made in God's image? And are we not more likely to forgive when we do?

Tony Stern
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

BAD MEDICINE

To the Editor:

Larry V. Amsel is correct; the corporate takeover of the trillion-dollar health-care market is a disaster. Cost control and profit deal with professional physicians as the equivalent of hired labor. Time limits on patient visits, bureaucratic oversight of procedures, and scrutiny of physicians' adherence to budget guidelines overrule professional judgment, and the "best interest of the patient" takes second place to profit and loss.

His remedies, however, reflect an incomplete grasp of the period, now ending, when medicine was in command. He recognizes that physicians forfeited much public trust in the period before the Clinton reform plan bit the dust—overtreatment, cost escalation, inequality in the physician-patient dyad, insensitivity to the patient as a person. Restoring the principles of free choice and professional autonomy for physicians would not free us from the problems that undermined the public's respect for the medical profession and created public readiness to buy the line that the corporate sector marketed in

(Continued on p. 78)

EDITORIAL

Clinton's Moral Backbone Problem and the Fate of the Democrats

Michael Lerner

If Bill Clinton wanted to ensure his re-election, he would have to tell the truth about the failures of his first four years. He would have to say, unequivocally and candidly, that he had failed to achieve many of his goals, and that the reason he had failed was that he had been too opportunistic, too concerned about popularity. He would have to demonstrate that he knew that he had failed to stay adequately committed to his own values in his first term, giving us a plausible reason to believe that he could and would change in his second term. Don't hold your breath.

Clinton is far more likely to run his campaign based on manipulation of images and vacuous sound bites and to assume that anyone who has been conscious and aware of politics in the past four years (and hence who will "see through" the hype) will nevertheless side with him because of "lesser evilism."

This strategy may work, but it's not a sure bet. If Bob Dole manages to distance himself from the more extreme elements of his own party, the political differences between the two candidates will seem rather narrow to many. Clinton has already begun to position himself so much further to the Right than any previous Democratic Party leader that it would be hard to distinguish many of this recent pronouncements from, say, the liberal wing of the Bush administration in 1989. Luckily for Clinton, Dole is unlikely to embrace a right-wing politics of meaning, because he doesn't understand that his best chance of winning rests in his ability to speak to the heart and soul of Americans and to offer a vision that addresses their deepest hopes.

If Clinton's and Dole's political differences remain obscured, the public might be forced to choose solely on the basis of personality, and in this arena Clinton seems to have a clear lead, since he embodies far more life energy, hopefulness, and intelligence than Dole. Clinton still resonates the hope for meaning that shaped the baby boomers and that remains the secret and often unconscious aspiration of most everyone else. On the terrain of personality, Clinton wins.

Personal magnetism may win for Clinton, yet it is a thin reed on which to hang his future. Politics is unpredictable, and there may be some who remember the way they were seduced and abandoned in 1992.

Four years ago, Bill Clinton enthusiastically borrowed from this magazine our politics of meaning to steer his election campaign. When, after listening to one of his campaign speeches, I mentioned to him that he seemed to be repeating themes in our editorials almost verbatim, Clinton responded, "I read your magazine very carefully."

Translating the politics of meaning into campaign language, Clinton promised to move the society away from the selfishness of the Reagan/Bush years. He held out the prospect of the emergence of a caring community that would privilege "we" over "I," a new commitment to each other over the narcissistic self-indulgence that had characterized America in the 1980s.

Many Americans were skeptical. The dominant cultural assumptions reinforce selfishness and teach us that "looking out for Number One" is the common sense of everyday life. So, most of us are torn between our aspirations to live in a more caring world and our resignation to the status quo, which tells us that our highest aspirations are totally unrealistic.

Clinton dared us to hope again. And in the days after his election in 1992, when he seemed to reiterate those themes and suggest that we could really change society, his popularity surged as people allowed themselves to fantasize that perhaps it would be safe to side with their most idealistic goals.

This was the climate within which a majority of Americans began to tell pollsters they were willing to pay higher taxes or higher health-care premiums. When people believe that they are part of a "we" that is committed to taking care of each other, many are willing to make personal sacrifices. In fact, people are grateful for the opportunity to serve a purpose higher than their narrow, material self-interest. They look back on the Depression, World War II, and the 1960s with nostalgia precisely because at those times Americans were part of a community that gave their lives meaning and purpose.

No wonder, then, that Clinton's popularity plummeted so dramatically in the late spring of 1993, when he began to abandon his campaign promises and did so out of self-interest. Gays in the military, intervention in

(Continued on p. 13)

SPECIAL FOCUS I: THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Netanyahu: The Civil War Continues

Michael Lerner

Israel has voted, violence has triumphed, and Jewish renewal has suffered a reversal. The fault rests equally with Left and Right.

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a religiously inspired Jewish right-winger, coupled with the terrorism of Hamas against Israeli civilians, set the stage for a right-wing victory, because these acts generated fears that the Left never adequately addressed. Terror would not have done it alone, because Israelis trusted that Rabin would be "strong" in response to the violence. Ironically, Shimon Peres could have inherited Rabin's mantle of strength, had he dealt unequivocally with Jewish right-wing extremists immediately after the assassination.

The momentary revulsion toward the Right created a climate in which Peres could have moved to expel the Jewish extremists from Hebron, closed Kiryat Arba and a few of the other most extreme settlements (perhaps resettling them in a Negev development town where their "pioneering spirit" could have been more useful for Israel), and accelerated the process of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the creation of an independent but demilitarized Palestinian state. While the right-wing outcry would have almost certainly led to some violence, a resolute Peres could have counted on most of the Israeli army to obey orders. And whatever public resistance his moves encountered would have been more than offset by the Israeli people's feeling of safety and security at finding themselves in the hands of a leader who had the confidence in his own vision to be willing to act decisively.

Had Peres and his cabinet coupled these decisive moves with a steady stream of words that unequivocally committed the State of Israel to a Jewish, Torah-based vision in which every person is recognized as being created in the image of God and equally deserving of respect, and had they then consistently applied that principle to the Palestinian people, they would have found many former "right-wingers" rallying to this new version of Zionism. Faced with a *fait accompli* as Peres completed withdrawal from the West Bank and dismantled some of the most egregious settlements (perhaps along the lines suggested by the Israeli religious peace movement and printed in TIKKUN's November/December 1995 issue—a plan that would have kept close to 80 percent of the Israeli settlements intact within a redrawn border), the electorate in May might have found itself far more willing to feel secure in the hands of Labor and the Left.

Instead, Peres used the months immediately following the assassination to turn public attention to Syria and a potential withdrawal from the Golan—the one facet of the peace process about which even some of us at TIKKUN have grave doubts from the standpoint of Israeli security. Moreover, Peres either ordered (or, more likely, got trapped by Shin Bet operatives in) the murder of Yahya Ayyash in Gaza, thus providing Hamas with the excuse that it needed among the Palestinian population to resume terrorist attacks that had at that point been suspended for over a year.

Yet the insecurity that people feel in Israel is not merely a product of the cycle of violence. Peres's vision of the post-peace future was centered upon an Israel that was technologically advanced, poised to become the Japan of the Middle East. It sounded fine to the upper middle class and to the many high-tech investors who made the Israeli economy flourish in the past few years.

But what of the lower-income Sephardim or Mizrachim, and the many Russian immigrants, who were beginning to notice that a rising tide did *not* raise all boats equally? For them, the allures of the free market seemed less likely to provide a meaning or purpose to their lives. No wonder, then, that in trying to explain to themselves why it is worth it to live in a society that has delivered them economic insecurity as well as the dangers of terrorism, they have turned to traditional religious and nationalistic communities of meaning. It is precisely the story-line from the religious or nationalist world—seeing the return to the land of Israel as the fulfillment of prophetic promises and as offsetting the suffering of 2,000 years of powerlessness and exile—that provides some framework of meaning that can help people accommodate to the continuing hardships that they must face as Israelis.

Five summers ago, TIKKUN Magazine held a conference in Jerusalem and appealed to the Israeli peace movement to broaden its scope in two crucial directions: Change the peace movement into a peace *and justice* movement that explicitly addresses the ways that Sephardic or Mizrachi Jews are oppressed in Israeli society, and adopt a politics-of-meaning approach that roots peace in the religious discourse and national experience of the Jewish people. Journalist Tom Segev mirrored the response of many Ashkenazic Peace Now activists when he expressed scorn at these "lessons from California." The peace movement was confident that it could accomplish its goals without reaching the minds and hearts of Israelis. "All we have to do is elect a pro-peace government," we were told, "and then Israelis will follow that government wherever it leads them, including to peace with the Palestinians. We don't have to worry about economic justice, and we certainly don't have to worry about spiritual yearnings of the Israeli populace, because what really counts is agreements on the ground: When those take place, consciousness will change accordingly."

For a while, the bureaucrats and their technocratic strategy seemed to make sense. The Oslo Accords moved forward, and Israelis seemed to accept them. Yet, within two years Rabin faced open rebellion and the outbreak of what we've described in these pages as a civil war, whose most decisive battle so far culminated in the Rabin assassination.

Even then, the technocrats imagined that their plans could be finessed without addressing the deeper meaning issues that troubled so many Israelis. It was this technocratic consciousness that led Peres to avoid any serious attempts to change the popular consciousness about Palestinians and their rights, imagining that he could sneak into a re-election and then quietly impose his own vision. No wonder, then, that Israelis could not ultimately trust the Left.

American Jews should now stand firm in demanding a new Zionism based on the sanctity of every human being. We should understand that the struggle for human rights is indivisible, that you can't fight for them just for yourself and not equally for others. The denial of rights to Palestinians goes hand in glove with the denial of rights to Jews from the Reform, Reconstructionist, Jewish Renewal, and Conservative streams of Judaism. The same demeaning of others that allows right-wing parties to go along with demands of the Lubavitch Chabad movement and other intolerant sectors of the ultra-Orthodox world to deny equal rights to non-Orthodox versions of Judaism also produces a consciousness that can insist on rights for Jews while denying the same rights to Palestinians.

We at TIKKUN call upon all branches of Judaism in America to stand up against the denial of rights to Reform, Reconstructionist, Jewish Renewal, and Conservative Jews in Israel, and to simultaneously and unequivocally oppose the denial of the rights to national self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Indeed, an American-Jewish community that had the moral vision to be willing to challenge Israel not only as a matter of self-interest (the case of challenging the denial of rights to strands of Judaism that originated in the United States) but also as a matter of a principled commitment to the rights of others (the case of Palestinian national self-determination on the West Bank) could make remarkable strides in relegitimating itself with the millions of Jews who have walked away from the organized Jewish community precisely because they suspected there was no such moral vision.

Unfortunately, the same "moral backbone issue" that has led to the defeat of Peres and to the electoral vulnerability of Bill Clinton remains a central problem for many Jews in the organized Jewish community. In that case, we are likely to see a further alienation of many American Jews from the institutions that claim to speak on their behalf.

With great sadness and heaviness of heart, we note that the Israeli population decisively missed an opportunity for peace and for embracing the best values of Judaism. We who believe that Judaism contains a vision of healing and transformation must once again endure a period in which the most visible representatives of the Jewish people will be those who pervert Jewish values to defend chauvinism, intolerance, territorial expansion, and lies. This Tisha B'Av, the traditional day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the defeat of Jewish national aspirations, we will be mourning as well for the hopes of peace and reconciliation that will be buried in the sands of hatred. All the sadder when we know that this defeat was not inevitable, and that it was the inability of the peace forces to broaden their vision in ways described above that helped contribute to their own isolation. In such moments when fear triumphs over hope, those of us who wish to change the dynamics must reassert our deepest commitment to a vision of love and mutual caring, rejecting the "realism" of the moment for our deeper knowledge that the God of the universe continues to be a source for healing and transformation even at the moments of deepest despair. □

In My End is My Beginning
Scenes from the Israeli Election Week

Wendy Orange



AP PHOTO/GREG MARINOVICH

As the plane lifts off, taking us from New York toward Tel Aviv four days before the Israeli election, a telegenic young woman in silk scarves is performing a modern jazz dance on the TV screen. Jagged and then lithe, her body moves like a flag in the breeze, enhanced by the latest in computerized pyrotechnics. Her backdrop is, of all places, Masada. Watching her, I realize: *This* is the new Middle East. Not just the peace process, but Israel's entrée into the global, financial, and telecommunications world, a direct result of the Oslo Accords. And it's *this* that most directly affects upper-middle-class Israelis: Masada no longer an icon for "Never Again," but a stage set for hip dancing to a computerized soundtrack.

The Israeli sitting next to me runs a software company. He's flying home to vote—like almost everyone else on this plane. During the whole nine-hour flight, he hums happily while fingering small computers and digital calculators. "Israelis have more fun," I say. He nods, because for him, it's true. He's going to vote not only for "Oslo" but also for these techno-dollars, the booming economy, the undulating image on the screen, Masada in cyberspace.

Wendy Orange is finishing her manuscript of her experience among Palestinians and Israelis during the Rabin-Peres years in Israel.

In the minivan from the airport, I'm with a family of *Haredim*, ultra-Orthodox Jews who've come here for the unveiling of their mother's gravestone. The daughter Rachel, like me in her early fifties, is wearing a wig and long skirt. We create a camaraderie despite my decidedly secular garb, the obvious clash in our styles of Judaism. We discover we both almost made *aliya*; she much preferred Israel to New York, but like me, had to move back. We talk of "the path not taken," the way our lives would have had such a different shape had we stayed in Israel. None of us can vote, but for these ultra-religious, Likud's Bibi Netanyahu is their hope.

At my friend Daphie's house, I arrive just in time for the televised debate between the candidates for prime minister, the incumbent, Labor's Shimon Peres, and Netanyahu. Peres is stiff and expressionless throughout, while the camera loves Bibi, with his American winks and hand gestures. The contrast is so painful, I can hardly watch, but from this minute I sense defeat.

The next day at Beit Agron press headquarters, the assorted English-speaking press is listening as, one after another, representatives of the Knesset parties give their pitches. There's a surreal quality to this democratic ritual, as a cavalcade of often-marginal viewpoints is evenhandedly put forth. We hear the Hadash Arab Member of Knesset, Hashem Mahmeed, whose constituents may vote *against* Bibi, not *for* Peres; after Israel's disastrous military operation in Lebanon right before the elections, he's clearly in a bind. Following him, an Islamic Arab from Nazareth wants Israel to cease being a Jewish state—he speaks calmly, as the mostly Jewish journalists take notes, equally calm. Then there's Yitzhak Meir from the National Religious Party, who sounds almost profound until he goes off on a long tangent no one can follow. A reporter from Belgium whispers, "Is there anyone sane in this country?"

Seeking the flavor of the campaign's final days, I drive with friends to the middle-class hilltop neighborhood of Beit Hakarem, where they distribute literature for Meretz, the human-rights party, while I look for those all important "undecided voters." Those I've spoken to in the last two days have decided for Netanyahu

(though all have said they'd have voted for Rabin, had he lived).

One woman has just this hour made up her mind for Netanyahu, while her father, who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s in Jerusalem's Old City with "Arab neighbors," has chosen Peres. "He knows the Arabs, we don't," she says.

"Why Bibi?" I ask.

"Because then the peace will go slower and we'll have more time to find real love between us. My Dad knows how to love Arabs, but we need more time to meet them; we need this process to slow down so we can educate our kids and their kids."

Just as I'm about to argue with her that speed (Peres's old line, "You can't leap over a chasm in two steps") would force those connections on the ground rather than the other way around, she wards me off. "I've just made up my mind. Please, I don't want to think it over again," as her father smiles ruefully.

Next I go to the Holiday Inn, the skyscraper of modern Jerusalem, where more candidates for the many small Knesset parties are due to speak after a debate between Likud Mayor Ehud Olmert and Labor Minister of Health Ephraim Sneh. Olmert's detractors snidely refer to him as "the snake." At close range, he seems nonchalant, yet full of confidence. He has a nimble mind and a clever tongue; with an intonation, he can shift the whole sense of a situation.

Olmert's description of Orient House in East Jerusalem—a PLO meeting place since 1992—conjures up an Arab takeover of the whole city. Although this shabbily elegant house has been owned by Faisal Husseini's family for generations, Olmert makes the meetings that have long taken place there suddenly seem lethal to Jerusalem's Jewish future. Labor Minister Sneh, like Peres in the debate, offers a limp, defensive response, as if Orient House *is* built of dynamite, simply because Palestinians do happen to live in Jerusalem, as they have for centuries.

At the break, I go upstairs to the lounge for a drink. At the next table sits a group of intense Sephardic men who look like gamblers or Mafiosi. The ten of them—unkempt, exhausted, animated—smoke like mad, guzzling coffee, hunched over sheets of paper, tallying numbers. These guys are what the Ashkenazi (European) Israelis refer to as "*frechkem*," a racial slur I had to struggle long and hard to understand.

Loosely translated, *frechkem* means primitive, uneducated, Arab Jews. From *their* point of view, the Ashkenazim are infuriating, especially their condescending superiority. When "we" were going to university, "they" were making gobs of money driving tourists around after the Six Day War, saving up to buy their taxi medallions, then gambling it away, beginning again.

These Israelis are not only the cab drivers, restaurant workers, the grocers, and go-fers; they carry the energy of Israel without benefiting from the peace process. Between the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim there is still a cultural schism of huge proportions. They do not create software of young women dancing at Masada. Many I know make their living taking tourists to the old Masada.

One of the men from the next table, whose face hints at a certain softness, walks past me. As he approaches, I say, politely, "It's none of my business, but what are you guys doing?"

Immediately, he barks: "Exactly. It's none of your business."

His buddies glare and close ranks. Later I'll see them leave en masse in a huge white van with Mayor Olmert—all smiles and back-slapping, an omen of things to come.

Back downstairs in the airless basement, a poised woman outlines the platform of the Third Way Party, focusing on the Golan Heights; she's ready to work with Labor or Likud. Following her is a long-winded aide to Natan Sharanksy, head of the newly formed Yisrael Ba'aliya—the Russian Immigrant Party. Oddly, he himself is not Russian, and talks way past his allotted ten minutes, meandering from his political point: Seventy-five percent of Russian immigrants have Ph.D.s and M.D.s. And, though most are employed, many are still consigned to menial work. Many of the Russian immigrants were heads of hospitals or University departments in the Ukraine or Moscow. Now, after years in Israel, they're stuck collecting urine samples or doing janitorial work in hospitals so like the ones they once administered. They're given no respect, remaining outside the fabric of intellectual life here, even though in what was the Soviet Union they were the elite.

Finally, Naomi Chazan of Meretz takes her turn. Always a powerful speaker, she's more passionate tonight than I've ever heard her. A Sabra, for years a professor at Hebrew University, now a member of the peace faction in the Knesset, she's known for being articulate and brilliant. Her first words wake up the room: "I'm very sorry the candidates for Prime Minister have blurred the boundaries, because the differences between Labor and Likud, between Peres and Netanyahu are vast," she begins. She goes on to delineate all that Meretz stands for: peace with the Palestinians (Arab Israelis and those in the territories), equality for women (Jewish and Arab); social justice for the Sephardim. Naomi Chazan is so persuasive and succinct, so *right*, that in that moment I want *her* to be prime minister.

All of a sudden, I'm furious at Labor's ineffectual campaign, the Arab-bashing they collude in, their fail-

ure to educate voters. When the panel breaks up, I seek out Naomi Chazan, to tell her how much her words helped wake me up and give me perspective. Six or seven people have already approached her; I wait my turn. When we're alone, I say: "Thanks, you really moved me, I only wish Peres could generate your energy and truth these days."

Naomi Chazan does not look at me. She turns away, then mutters as she smokes her cigarette without so much as a glance my way: "Peres has my vote. He has to talk the way he does to the 7 percent undecided." It's the first unintelligent thing I've heard her say, since the undecided can't decide if the Prime Minister doesn't speak out.

The social dynamics of this moment are piercing. I feel like a nobody, an invisible fool. Naomi Chazan has seen me for years; minutes ago, I revered her, but now she is being totally dismissive, refusing to look me in the eye. Hers is not Sephardic rudeness, loud and direct, but Ashkenazic rudeness, where the subtext, as I take it (how could anyone not?), is: "You are of no importance, you don't get what's going on." What I experience to be a stupid moment of mine, of hers, will in fact be a profoundly elucidating image, once the election is lost.

Driving away, I'm not only personally hurt, but fixated on the rampant racism revealed by the campaign. Netanyahu's new slogan, "Bibi is good for the Jews," goes unchallenged by Labor, although the party's future depends on a working coalition with Israeli Arabs, not to mention partnership with Arafat and the Palestinians in the territories. Yet, Labor has pandered to Jews' fears of Arabs as much as Likud.

I'm thinking how all this would look from the helicopters that have been loudly churning overhead all week. From that perspective, I see that these elections have been held with guns pointed at the Arabs all around us (the territories clamped tight; Lebanon's Qana, that totally revolting, senseless blood bath). Something is so wrong with this picture. Why was Peres so withholding on his one TV debate, when in person he's a genius at opening minds? From the helicopter view, I see the confident energy from the Right contrasted with lassitude (born from lies), from the Left.

On Sahaladin Street, I go to meet Palestinian friends for dinner. Psychologist James Hillman once wrote: "The true revolutionary is he or she who stays true to depression"—a phrase I only really comprehended after I started visiting the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians' long suffering is soulful; their sadness has spine. In their presence, I always feel able to accept the bad fortune that comes to each of us. It's an attitude hard to find or hold in the West, but one that Palestinian stoicism manages to sustain.

Most Palestinians I've met sweeten loneliness. They emanate the kind of sad that knows that you're sad too, whoever you are. Their need for recognition—psychological as well as political—is carried off without a whiff of narcissism, but as an invitation to enter all those hidden layers of yourself. You feel a kindness enveloping you, as I do tonight in this small restaurant in East Jerusalem. And I notice, for the thousandth time, how Israelis are great at generating joy, ushering anyone into the manic side of life, while Palestinians are generally more sensitive to the slow, long, immediate moment, nourishing interiority.

Election Day arrives. Peres is still slightly ahead in the polls. There's a holiday feeling, people go to swimming pools, sit and chat in cafés, after voting. As the polls close, I decide not to join the crowds at either Likud or Labor headquarters in Tel Aviv, but to watch the election with friends in an apartment in the German Colony. Eitan has three televisions going: Israel's Channel 1 (Haim Yavon), Israel's Channel 2 (Gadi Sukenik) and also CNN, which translates the others, with Christiane Amanpour of Bosnia fame, hosting.

At precisely 10 p.m., there's a countdown; the crowds shout from 10 down to 0 and then the results are given. Though based upon only a small number of voters, the exit polls declare Peres the winner on both Israeli stations. Within minutes, they're interviewing Yossi Beilin and other Labor Party leaders about the make-up of the new Cabinet and Knesset. Despite the large votes for the smaller Knesset parties, it all looks good for the peace process. Only Christiane Amanpour keeps stressing it's not over, far from it. Yet the Israeli channels take the polling results, however close, as definitive. Everyone in this room is relieved, but there's a kind of numbness at the emotional center. Maybe because we're surprised at how close the race is, maybe because in some nether part of ourselves we know this isn't a sure win, despite the Israeli commentators' pronouncements. At midnight, we go our separate ways: Tomorrow there's work and school for the kids.

With morning comes the shocking news of the turn around. While Israel slept, Netanyahu took the lead. By the slimmest of margins, Israel rejected Peres's vision of peace for Bibi's tough talk and appeals to fear.

Simultaneously and spontaneously, all of us who believe passionately in the peace process are in denial, using nearly identical phrases and words inside the shock.

Maybe it won't be so bad. Remember Begin and the Sinai .... Maybe the Right can finish the peace we started .... Bibi loves power, he won't do what he said in his campaign. He won't start a new intifada, won't really build new settlements ... He can't respond violently to

every Palestinian flare-up … Maybe he will withdraw from Hebron … He'll dump Ariel Sharon … Ex-minister of defense Moshe Arens isn't so bad … David Levy as foreign minister? He'll just get haircuts in Paris …. Netanyahu would rather hang out with Bill Clinton and assorted sheiks than the *Haredim*….

We who are so smart are not so smart this morning, this afternoon, this night. In the first stage of grief, of losing, everyone I know is strangely numb, even exhilarated. Often, after shocking bad news, there's an initial rush of energy, as if it isn't so. We've just lost what feels like a lifetime of work, yet the mind can't wrap around all that at first. We're rationalizing, spinning scenarios that seem plausible even as we ask ourselves, "Are we in denial? Are we rationalizing?" In a few days no one will remember a word of what they're saying now. "Humankind cannot bear very much reality," I notice, as I visit house after house.

My friends Jon and Anna are sitting on their terrace, listening to blaring TVs from the apartments in the next house, where Russian immigrants live. Jon muses: "I gave our Russian neighbors some potted plants on the condition they water them everyday. They didn't today. Is it possible they feel so empowered in one day? Because they won seven Knesset seats? Would they stop watering our Anglo plants?" We laugh. "Yes, I do think so."

A politically active Meretz friend, Rachel, counted votes at the polls all election night. She says: "It was very sweet among the different sub-cultures counting ballots. It was interesting to meet the *Other* Israelis. They weren't hostile and crazy like the settlers. It was a good vibe. Maybe the Right and Likud need to play out their insane scenario for a couple of years. Then they'll come around." Three days later she only dimly remembers these thoughts. Worried sick about her teen-aged son in the army, she imagines the West Bank going up in flames, Palestinians losing hope, a war in Hebron.

But what Rachel has said about the mix of sub-cultures at the polling booth strikes me as important, as I walk for the last hour around Jerusalem, where I witness a complete upheaval of consciousnness. Imagine walking around Manhattan and seeing the disenfranchised—the working class, the homeless, Blacks, Puerto Ricans—singing, while the elite, we who rose up through the university, family connections, or smarts are in shock, morose.

In the first stage of grief, something about this strange turnaround seems … fair. Because we were so busy being fair to the Palestinians (out of morality *and* self interest), we ignored the Israelis below us, those without our more leisurely jobs, our education, our comfortable houses, our freedom to empathize and think it all through. We've been arrogant, and now we've lost, and we better get to know them, begin intra-Israeli dialogue.

As I pack, a friend offers to give me a novel for the airplane. A novel? I laugh. What storyteller, what Scheherazade or Tolstoy, could compare to what's happening all around us on this tiny spot of magical land? Who could dream up this cast of characters: the *Haredim* with their beaming hundred-year-old rebbe dispensing orders to vote for Bibi? Or the others: Russian immigrant doctors turned janitors, Ethiopian immigrants whose blood is dumped, the Mizrachi Jews from Arab countries who look like Arabs but hate Arabs, the bitter rivalries among the tiny Israeli Arab factions.

Before the thud of pure misery falls on the heart, I'm inside a literary mind; a novel for the airplane is the last thing I need. For what writer could create this backdrop: Powerful desert mountains next to this profusion of plants, flowers, and trees blossoming so luxuriantly? Who could imagine these thousand and one Israeli minds, matched by equally fierce Palestinian schisms? What could I read tonight that would hold a candle to this plot: The Chinese torture of winning at night, only to lose by morning? What pages will hold images as powerful as what we've lived through: Peres slumped inside his dark-windowed bullet-proof car; Bibi the

(Continued on p. 76)

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No Time for Despair

Noga Tarnopolsky

In the aftermath of Benjamin Netanyahu's victory, members of the Israeli Left feel almost overcome by disappointment and by equally potent sentiments of dejection, failure, and depression. Previously active, energetic people seem on the verge of publicly declaring defeat, turning inward, and hibernating for the next four years. There is the sense that we have lost something much greater than just an election; perhaps, even, the very soul of Israel.

But I believe despair is out of place; self-examination and a significantly increased emphasis on activism and action are in order now. If unchecked, despair, more than the Likud, will truly defeat the Israeli Left. Benjamin Netanyahu, is, after all, only human, a politician interested in his own success. He can and will be subject to intense pressure from Labor and Meretz in the Knesset, from Avigdor Kahalani and Natan Sharansky in his own coalition, and, most important, from the majority of secular, pro-peace Israelis on the streets.

Despair is out of place because it blinds us to the great victories of the liberal and pro-peace movements in Israel. It is understandable, but a mistake, to see in Netanyahu's adoption of the language of Labor policies a simple usurpation of the discourse of the Left. He has in some ways already begun his campaign for a second term, and when he says he is committed to pursuing peace, it is a response to a true desire on the part of the Israeli people to proceed with the Oslo agreements.

Many say he will pursue peace, and farcically, at that, only to placate the United States. But the constituents he faces here in Israel are a more significant pressure group; let us not forget that 70 percent of Israelis say they support the continuation of the Oslo process. Thus, the electoral battle was about *how* to proceed with the Palestinians, not *if*. This fact itself is remarkable. Only four years ago, Yitzhak Rabin won office by promising that he would never speak with the PLO or with Yasir Arafat. The Likud argued back in favor of continuing settlements in the Greater Land of Israel.

Where are we today? We have Dore Gold, Netanyahu's senior adviser, phoning Arafat's senior advisor only two days after the vote to reassure him that the new government will continue to pursue peace. And in terms of the political debate here, the Greater Land of Israel is dead.

As a matter of fact, the settler movement, which was outspoken to the point of violence in the months leading up to the assassination, has virtually disappeared from the political scene. Netanyahu is likely to expand certain settlements, perhaps Efrat or Ma'ale Adumim, in areas designated to be incorporated into Israel in a final agreement, much like Rabin planned to do. But this does not mean, prima facie, that that the I.D.F. in Hebron will not redeploy, that negotiations on a permanent status will be halted, or that the Oslo Accords will not be implemented. The peace process is already proving itself much more formidable a "fact on the ground" than those settlements ever were.

We have won a huge battle. Israel has undergone a tremendous spiritual shift in a very short period of time, and the terms of the debate here have changed immeasurably. In four years, we have shaken Arafat's hand, at first ambivalently, then with greater confidence; we have turned lands over to a new Palestinian Authority; we have welcomed Jordan's King Hussein to Jerusalem; we have been received in almost all the Arab lands by their leaders; we have seen our prime minister gunned down and sixty people killed by terror attacks in the last three months. Many Israelis simply feel they need a break. Most people who voted for Netanyahu have not turned their backs on the Arab world just as it was opening up to them; they want peace, but they also need to rest.

Here the Left's self-examination should begin. Shimon Peres and the Labor Party failed in their efforts to convey compassion to a population that basically supported them, but needed reassurance. If we remember the 70-percent figure I mentioned above, it is shocking to realize that among Jews, Netanyahu beat Peres by fully 12 percent. These are the people to focus on before the next elections. Labor and

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Meretz have to develop strategies not only to express empathy, but to better explain commitments to civil rights and social policies that do matter, even as we pursue peace.

It is in part Rabin's triumph in transforming Israeli political reality that brought about Peres's defeat. We should remember Winston Churchill, who lost at the polls after his great victory over Germany at the end of World War II. Like the British of the 1940s, the Israelis of 1996 are spent and exhausted. To say that the will of the voters was manipulated by outside forces or by Netanyahu's propaganda machine is to make a mockery of Israel's sturdy democracy.

In many ways, this election pitted Benjamin Netanyahu against the ghost of Yitzhak Rabin, and Rabin was two things Benjamin Netanyahu desperately wishes to be: a great military hero and a bold, even surprising statesman. Yitzhak Rabin's greatest legacy to Israel is a vision of himself and of Israel as anti-victims. He believed that Israel had outgrown the victim stage and had come into its own as a strong and independent nation. Time and time again, Rabin told his compatriots they were more than survivors—that they had become, in less than fifty years of statehood, equal to all, citizens of the world, negotiating from a position of strength—in other words, winners. We now face an extraordinary opportunity to pursue peace. With Netanyahu installed as prime minister, with the Left active and vocal, and with the Oslo Accords a reality, we may have eliminated the natural opposition Rabin and Peres faced.

It is true that in recent years Netanyahu has suffered from a Nixon-like curse of clumsiness, an almost terminal lack of grace, and flip-flops which make him appear to have no genuine ideology. But today, if nothing else, his interests are the interests of the State of Israel. If he has not realized it yet, he will soon come to see, as Rabin did, that he can achieve real security for Israel only by continuing the partnership with the Palestinians and the pursuit of peace with other Arab nations. He will not easily send Israeli troops back into Gaza.

Those of us who truly believe that this peace process is in the best interests of Israel need not panic. To say that Benjamin Netanyahu's election signifies the end of the peace process, the political (or real) death of Arafat, the end of U.S.-Israeli cooperation, and, no less, the beginning of a hundred years of war is to grant Netanyahu powers not vested in any human being. It is a preposterous assertion because the truth is that we have only lost an election, and not the soul of Israel. Far from it. More than ever, Israelis feel that peace may be within reach, and that reality has been transformed.

Netanyahu's victory is not more than another step on this road. □

EDITORIAL

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Bosnia, human rights for China, environmental protection of Western grazing lands, the nomination of Lani Guinier as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights—these were some of the most memorable areas of retreat. Yet more than the retreats themselves, it was the way they were explained by White House "spin doctors" that made them so devastating. In each case, the White House officials seemed to suggest that Clinton had been studying polls and focus groups and had decided that the position he had promised to defend was too unpopular at the moment and would cost him too much to defend.

Here was the person who had been promising to lead us into a new world of idealism and caring in which there would be a "we" that would permit us to transcend our narrow self-interest now telling us that he could not stand up for his own ideals, because doing so was adverse to his self-interest. So, the most powerful elected official in the country, who had promised us a new community of meaning and higher purpose, was now telling us that he had to watch out for himself and couldn't stand up with us and for us.

No wonder that Americans' disillusionment was swift and widespread. "If there is no 'we'," many people reasoned, "then why should *I* be the one who continues to support higher taxes and higher health-care premiums?" The result was a precipitous fall in Clinton's popularity and the public's retreat from support for his programs. That retreat left an opening for the success of the insurance industry's "Harry and Louise" anti-health-care-reform ads. If the bottom line is narrow self-interest, then any plan to help others seems far-fetched and "costs too much."

Once this dynamic takes hold, many Americans are drawn to a mean-spirited conservatism (in both parties) that tells them that they ought to cut government spending and thus lower their taxes. This spirit is not the truth of what Americans want, but rather the truth of what Americans want when they have been disappointed once again, as they were with Clinton, and hence unwilling to risk hoping that a "we" is possible.

Having created this dynamic, Clinton proceeded to be a "realist" and redefine himself as a politician who shares this pessimistic attitude toward what "we" can accomplish together (as signified in his declaration

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Bullets, Bombs, Ballots

Martin J. Gidron

Let us be clear, first of all, about one thing. The Israeli elections of 1996 were not determined on May 29. They were settled neither on the basis of eight-tenths of one percentage point for Benjamin Netanyahu, nor on the basis of an eleven-percent split in his favor in the Jewish vote, nor on the basis of Haim Ramon's lackluster campaign for Labor, nor even by Shimon Peres's legendary unpopularity. They were decided by three bullets from Yigal Amir's gun on the night of November 4, 1995, and by four bombs carried by suicide terrorists into Israel in the early spring of 1996.

The result could hardly have been worse. Iran and the Islamic fundamentalists, on the one hand, and the Jewish fanatics, on the other, successfully conspired to put an end to the peace process, which threatened their millennialist worldviews with marginalization and ultimate extinction. The enemies of democracy managed to take away from the Israeli electorate the possibility of



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making a rational choice. To speak of the will of the people in such circumstances is sheer mockery.

What degree of sincerity is implied in the Likud's slogan, "peace with security," is a question for sophists. Do Netanyahu and company really believe that what they plan to offer the Palestinians and Syria—to wit, nothing—will be an inducement to "another peace," as the right-wing catch-phrase of the past few years has it? We are speaking of irrelevancies.

Irrelevant too, is the supposed change in Likud policy following the Rabin assassination. Dan Meridor and other Likud "moderates" seem to have persuaded Netanyahu that he was not going to get very far by opposing the peace process and offering nothing but perpetual conflict in its stead. So we now have the spectacle of right-wing spokespeople protesting in injured tones the slander that they are "against peace." We all want peace, we just disagree over how to achieve it, said Netanyahu, and Labor let him get away with it.

Today's Likud party line, insofar as it can be pinpointed at all, is that the Oslo Accords are facts which the new government is reluctantly obliged to recognize. This is reminiscent of the grudging recognition of the State of Israel by some of the Arab states, coupled with demands that no Israeli government could satisfy. In the illusion-dominated political landscape of the Middle East, recognition of reality is thought to be a courageous act deserving of commendation.

The question, as the Right's newly "pragmatic" spokesmen are saying, is where we go from here. Now that they have the power, the "peace process" is on a road to nowhere. They are convinced that too much has been "given up" already. Those parts of the Oslo Accords which have not yet been put into practice, especially Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, will not be implemented, because they run against everything the Right has been saying since September 1993. Negotiations will of course continue, under American pressure. Why not? Talk is cheap. But the comparison now being drawn between Netanyahu and Menachem Begin, who signed the peace treaty with Egypt, is deliberately misleading.

Begin could give up the Sinai—with Labor support and against the opposition of half his own party—because it did not form an essential part of the revisionist program, which is still at the heart of Likud dogma. According to this philosophy, the West Bank ("Judea and Samaria") cannot be given up, not one inch of it—or, now that control of some Palestinian cities has been handed over, certainly not one inch more.

A better guide to what we are about to witness is the

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farcical Madrid conference held, under intense American pressure, after the Gulf War. As former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir candidly admitted after the 1992 elections, his strategy in these negotiations was simple stonewalling. Hold the Palestinians off for ten years, he figured, and by that time it will be too late—Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip will make it impossible to give anything back.

Netanyahu is planning to use the same deceptive strategy, even if he is younger and prettier than Shamir and speaks English with an American accent. Israel's leading daily, *Yediot Ahronot*, reported that Netanyahu plans to pour billions of dollars into new settlements. Netanyahu says he only plans to spend around $300 million a year on them. In any case, his strategy is clear. How could it be otherwise, even if he wanted to pursue a different course, with the settlers and their supporters, such as Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan, forming a dominant part of his victorious coalition? Any protests by the Russian immigrant party and the "centrist" Third Way party will easily be brushed aside. They will be outvoted in the cabinet every time.

It may be true that the Palestinians have historically been blind to their own interests and utterly resistant to any calls for dialogue or compromise until fairly recently. But once it really sinks in that they will get a very limited autonomy and nothing else—that the isolated blocs they now control are not the first step toward statehood, but Bantustans within which the Israeli government means to restrict them forever—they will feel that they have nothing to lose by taking an irredentist stance. Hamas's and Islamic Jihad's denunciations of Arafat as a traitor to the Palestinian cause will find a much more receptive audience. Arafat himself will likely be overthrown, armed rebellion will break out throughout the "autonomous" areas, and Israeli troops will again occupy Gaza and Nablus.

But will Netanyahu and his cronies then admit that they were wrong all along? Not on your life. No, the renewal of the intifada will prove that the previous Israeli government led the Palestinians to expect the world, that you can't trust the Arabs, that all they understand is force, etc., etc. And of course, with Arafat safely dead or in exile, the oldest right-wing shibboleth of all—"There's no one to talk to"—will enjoy a revival. If this catastrophic chain of events causes Egypt and Jordan to break off diplomatic relations, if Israel's new ties with the developing world go up in smoke, if the United States cuts its aid to Israel, if the economy collapses in consequence—well, if the whole world is against us, let the whole world go to hell, as the old Israeli song has it.

To someone who is used to American television, one of the most startling things about Israeli news broadcasts is the utter lack of foreign coverage, except for stories that are too big to ignore or that directly affect Israel, such as the U.S. presidential elections. It is a telling deficiency. Israelis are so involved in their daily struggles, both external and internecine, that they are relatively ignorant of and indifferent to world trends. Even Jewish history, from the ancient Israelite kingdoms to the Diaspora to the Holocaust, is less a source of understanding than of emotion.

So let us, as the Right is always urging us to do, take cognizance of a few unpleasant facts. Whatever else has changed, Israel's location has not, nor have the threats to its existence evanesced just because the Soviet Union has collapsed. Iran will likely have nuclear weapons, and missiles that can hit Israel, within the next few years, while Libya and Iraq are known to possess chemical and/or biological weapons. The Oslo Accords are an attempt to build an alliance between Israel and moderate Arab states, to push the extremist states into the margins. If the accords are now abrogated, this attempt will fail, and the security supposedly provided by Israeli control over the West Bank and the Golan Heights will prove illusory indeed.

It is on this point that the "security" argument of the Right proves to be as shallow as their "peace" argument. Intoxicated by Israeli military power, the crackpot realists of the Israeli Right refuse to see that Israel can never, under any circumstances, impose a political solution on its Arab opponents. Israel's smashing victory in the 1967 war could not produce peace, because the Arab states remained united in their rejectionist stance at Khartoum the following year. The attempt to install a pro-Israeli government by force in Beirut in 1982 failed, and the people who are responsible for that bloody failure and who learned nothing from it are now back in power.

It is difficult to be optimistic under these circumstances. Some supporters of the peace process, understandably searching for a glimmer of hope in what looks to be unmitigated disaster, point to Netanyahu's so-called pragmatism as a sign that he will dump his party's platform, turn his back on his coalition partners, and proceed with the negotiations. We are told that the terms of the debate have changed because of the peace process, and that Netanyahu and the Likud have been forced to take cognizance of that fact. Now the job of the Left, so this argument goes, is to help encourage him to move in the right direction. But this argument flies in the face of the ideology of the Israeli Right since its founding. Consistently, the secular Israeli Right—and later the religious settler movement—have tended to be

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Let Them Eat Pie: Philanthropy à la Mode

Arlene Goldbard

It's been nearly twenty years, but it seems like yesterday. The sidewalks of New York were chilly, but once inside the Major National Foundation, we found ourselves in a rain-forest luxe that forced us to wipe the fog from our glasses. My husband and I—business and writing partners as well as mates—had been invited to journey from California to meet with the head of the culture division of the Major National Foundation. (The foundations mentioned in this essay will remain nameless. My points concern the entire contemporary private philanthropic enterprise, not a few aberrant exeptions.)

Before we met "Mr. MNF," we had engaged in a kind of epistolary courtship. A friend gave some of our writing on cultural policy to Mr. MNF, who wrote that he was impressed. He wanted to talk. He asked us for "a budget," which seemed rather premature, since we hadn't suggested a project. But, perched at the rim of the economic abyss, we were wary in those days of interrogating any gift horses that trotted past.

As it happened, between our initial correspondence with Mr. MNF and his request for a budget, we had gotten involved in a project, one that badly needed support. We had been asked to become national organizers for an alliance of community arts groups whose leaders had managed, by dint of sweat and imagination, to cobble together many worthy projects: neighborhood cultural centers; oral history-based theaters; murals and community gardens. Now they wanted to help each other improve their work, to make their case jointly for support, to share tools and ideas. Because my husband and I were experienced organizers who shared their values, they thought we could help. We wrote asking Mr. MNF if a start-up budget for this organization might not be what he had in mind, and by return mail, he said it might indeed.

Holding hands, we held our breath as the elevator climbed inside an atrium. We assumed poses of purposeful professionalism as the elevator opened onto an expanse of seamlessly symmetrical wood grain. Along the corridor, desks flanked every door, and behind each one was a smiling, well-groomed young woman. As we passed, one of these gatekeepers pressed a spot on the wall and a wide file drawer emerged like a giant tongue to accept a morsel of paper, then retracted, leaving no trace.

For just an instant, I hesitated at the door to Mr. MNF's office, thinking of Hansel and Gretel at the witch's house, wondering if I'd be swallowed up. Had I known more about such things, I should have wondered instead how long it would take to spit me out. Inside, we found both Mr. MNF and the vice president above him, Mr. Big. Both looked nervous. Neither seemed remotely tipsy, but every time they exhaled, the rich aroma of recently consumed alcohol filled the air. We smiled. We shook hands.

"So," said Mr. MNF, grinning like a crocodile, "this organization's just the two of you, hmmm?"

The meeting went downhill from there, in a Kafkaesque tumble for which our previous cordial correspondence had left us entirely unprepared. We considered it a triumph of self-restraint that we managed to complete the return elevator ride without bursting into sobs; our tears flowed on the walk back to the subway.

A week later, back home in California, our friend who'd put us in touch with Mr. MNF called with some enlightening information. "Your appointment was right after lunch, right?" Right. "Well, Mr. Big was keeping an eye on Mr. MNF. You see, he'd taken MNF to lunch, bought him a couple of martinis, and fired him on the spot. He couldn't tell you, so he had to make out he was rejecting your project on the merits. Bad timing."

As social policy, the charitable tax exemption embodies a dual acknowledgment. On one side of the equation, it recognizes that many things need doing—social goods of various kinds, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, preserving the past, planning for the future—which cannot, even in the most robust Opportunity Society, turn a buck. To make it easier for private citizens to carry out these worthy enterprises, the government allows them to form orga-

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nizations that earn money and collect contributions without paying taxes.

On the other side of the equation is the recognition that some individuals and businesses accumulate wealth while others do not, so that these same social goods will be unevenly distributed unless the wealthy share their bounty with the less fortunate. To encourage charity, the government allows individuals to forgo paying taxes on money they contribute to tax-exempt organizations. And it allows individuals and businesses to set up their own tax-exempt corporations expressly to receive and disburse gifts and grants: These are foundations.



In the late 1970s—when my husband and I fulfilled Mr. MNF's postprandial need for an object over which he could exercise the dominance to which he had just been subjected—the top personal income-tax bracket was around 70 percent, so the tax exemption released considerable economic power. The wealthy could choose to keep their dollars and, clever accountants notwithstanding, pay out 70 cents to the government and spend the remaining 30 cents as they wished. Or they could set up foundations and invest close to 100 percent of each dollar in organizations and activities that advanced their social aims and added luster to their reputations.

With the top tax bracket now around half its pre-Reagan level, much of the economic incentive has been lost. But the invitation to make social policy embodied in the tax exemption is still a powerful lure, as are the wishes to associate oneself with the virtue of generosity and immortalize one's family name.

In some countries, this problem of redistributing wealth is resolved by taxing private incomes and allowing the government to spend the resulting revenues to address the deficiencies of the marketplace. American distaste for this practice is often justified on the grounds of supporting a countervailing force to government, to prevent a big-brother state from cornering the market, so to speak, in experimental theater or adult education or hot lunches for seniors.

In principle, this has a certain ring to it. Few of us would willingly leave cultural development or community service or even after-school sports completely in the hands of the modern centralized state. But in practice, this is a distinction with very little difference: Oppositional elements whose aims are so antithetical to the government's values that public subsidy is impossible receive a minuscule fraction of the not-for-profit sector's resources. Most private philanthropies, rather than balancing the excesses or omissions of public subvention, use their resources to pursue much the same ends as the public sector, by much the same means. Most foundation money goes to such endeavors as hospitals, medical research, animal protection, and education, which also get support from the public sector. Indeed, in some categories of philanthropy, public dollars are required to follow private proclivities: The National Endowment for the Arts, for example, grants almost all its organizational support to groups that can command a large match in private dollars.

About five years ago, I made a vow. While I hung like a side of beef from the sticky railing of a Lexington Avenue subway, I promised myself that I would never again appear at a foundation in the role of supplicant: I might attend a meeting, give a talk, even write a report or offer advice. But I would never again submit to another encounter like the one from which I had just emerged.

Foundations are all about framing and spin. The small, progressive ones construct their headquarters to resemble the offices of their grantees: political posters, slightly threadbare furnishings, boxes of herbal tea just waiting to drown themselves in boiling water for the good of the visitor. Don't hate us, these offices plead, we're just like you, only a little richer. But the office I visited that morning made a different statement. It housed one of the biggest and best-endowed of the old-line-Establishment liberal foundations. Acres of glass afforded a view of Manhattan that reduced everything to the scale of an ant farm. The lush carpeting seemed to suck at one's shoes like quicksand. The vast, gleaming conference table was as free of blemish as a field of fresh snow. Delighted to see you, the decor asserted, you are so lucky to be here.

My husband and I were there at the behest of an experienced foundation-watcher who felt that Major National Foundations might at last be ready to risk investing in our projects, despite our dicey cultural politics. In the dozen years since our encounter with Mr. MNF, we had given foundations a wide berth, support-

ART BY SETH TOBACMAN AND BARBARA LEE

ing ourselves through a consulting business. We operated out of our former garage, renting our hearts and minds to organizations preoccupied with the problems of surviving a hostile political and economic environment. We worked hard, kept our fees low, and considered ourselves lucky that people paid us to think—and help them think—about questions we found absolutely riveting anyway.

But our consulting work, no matter how engrossing and worthwhile, was what musicians refer to as a "day job": something you do to support your real interest and obsession. Ours were cultural policies and politics. We wrote essays. We gave talks and taught classes. But the limit to what we could accomplish in our off-hours was soon reached. We had finally decided to make a grant proposal for a project that could pass along some of what we and our colleagues had learned. Our proposed training and think-tank project for cultural organizers included meetings, dialogues, and publications. We hoped underwriting would be available to enable hard-pressed activists to partake of the usual pursuits available to people whose professions bring them enough surplus cash to finance the costs of self-examination and self-improvement: academics, doctors, architects, foundation executives.

Our meeting was with two program officers, perfectly nice, well-meaning individuals who could be faulted only for allowing silver to blur their vision. This was their first question: "Why should we support two white intellectuals to do this when the people who are actually working at the grass roots need funding?" I can't remember the last question.

Had we been in a movie, we might have straightened our spines and asked "Do you know who you're talking to?" Clearly, they evidently knew nothing of our work in the field—of the many times those grassroots organizations spent hard-won funds to hire us—because that work hadn't been supported by their foundation's grants; and in their world, only their grants confer legitimacy. They knew they hadn't funded us before. It wasn't important to know much else.

In the Jewish tradition, the sage Maimonides described eight levels of charity. The lowest is to give coldly and reluctantly. This practice almost always binds the recipient to the giver with public supplication and obsequious gratitude, so that while seeming to help, charity perversely reinforces the perception of helplessness—the weakness of the beneficiary, the potency of the donor. In contrast, the highest form of charity is to prevent poverty. At its best, such charitable action is anonymous, given for its own sake and with an open hand, without the odious fear of being cheated that obsesses the Haves in American society

Following Maimonides' criteria, almost all organized philanthropy ought to be consigned to a new nadir, a charitable sub-basement, because its essential character impels participants toward ethical transgression and emotional self-harm. The culture of the foundation world is a culture of lies. Prospective grantees are expected to make extravagant claims for their projects: A program of lunch-time classes accompanied by meals and child care is devised for single mothers. The proposal claims that in a few months of Mondays the project will not only teach participants all the "survival skills" they need, but also demonstrate a measurable decline in substance abuse, a rise in employment and income, and a corresponding decline in public assistance. To write candidly that the project will be fun and interesting for women who otherwise have little time for themselves, or that it is hoped that one or two of the participants will seize the opportunity to better her lot, is to guarantee the proposal's failure.

Controversial projects are expected to tone down their messages. Since projects are expected to break new ground, it is understood that if old wine is being served up, it must first be decanted into new rhetorical bottles. The economy of lies is an inflationary one, requiring successively larger claims just to match the competition. In Philanthropyland, as in the Red Queen's kingdom, "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."

I have read hundreds of grant proposals; not a single one has been entirely fulfilled. Lies are the grant-seeker's ante; they guarantee that odds will favor the house. If a foundation wants to reject a project, an applicant organization can simply be called on its lies; if the aim is to make a grant, the lies can remain unquestioned. Pace Ross Perot, it's that simple.

Around the polished-wood conference table, power relations are seldom acknowledged, although they determine everything. Program officers may ask any question, no matter how rude, and supplicants are expected to answer with a smile, no matter how mortified or insulted they feel. While Maimonides' lowest form of charity demands fawning appreciation from recipients, the culture of the foundation world requires this as a precondition for consideration. The exemplary grant-seeker displays fulsome gratitude even for a rejection, banking credit for future applications.

On the subway after my farewell appearance as a grant applicant, I realized I was unwilling to withstand the further violation of my essential nature involved in enacting philanthropic rituals of submission. Another way to say this might be to admit that

the chip on my shoulder, having remained firmly in place for the previous forty-four years, would finally prevent my getting through the door to the alms house.

I realize that it is considered in poor taste to bring up the subject of class in America, but I must. I'm a first-generation American, and my heritage is solidly working class. My father was a housepainter. My mother worked in a doctor's office and retired at eighty. I am proud of having made my way in the world without the advantage of money or social status, but it was not a matter of choice. We would have liked to have money, but then we also would have liked to be able to fly. I lapped up a certain mistrust of the upper classes along with my milk and pabulum, and having been sensitized to the class structure, I found ample corroboration of its corrosive power in daily life.

As a child, I displayed artistic talent, so I was able as a young person to enter the mobile, shape-shifting social class known as "the art world." Within it, I was an activist against the war, against the draft, for social justice.

In the early '70s, I helped to organize artists protesting the self-regarding cultural displays being readied for the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. One of our targets was San Francisco's Fine Arts Museums, then slated to receive a huge American art collection (which meant, as we never tired of saying, a collection of paintings by white men that purported to represent "American art"). It incensed us that these publicly owned museums were governed by a group of trustees whose interests and backgrounds, as Dorothy Parker might have put it, ran the gamut from A to B. We extended our protest to a call for institution-wide reform, beginning with more diverse trustees of various colors, genders, and backgrounds—people whose tax payments actually supported the museums.

In the midst of this campaign, one of the chief curators approached me, saying that the trustees were wary of adding just any outsider to their number, but they would be comfortable with someone like myself. Hadn't I gone to one of the Seven Sisters? (I did not attend college.) Would I consider accepting a seat? (I would not.)

That was when I learned that elites believe intelligence and fluency are class attributes, incorporating an internalized allegiance to class interests. When that allegiance is secure, a certain latitude is allowed for criticism. By tacitly agreeing not to upset the applecart, one is permitted to take a bite of the apple of rebellion. Those not born into the elite, gain entry to its philanthropic culture by demonstrating that they are capable of operating by its precepts, the rules of the ruling class.

It is hard to grasp the true character of the philanthropic culture, because individuals experience it primarily in interpersonal terms. Most people who have contact with the philanthropic world know decent, conscientious individuals who occupy positions of importance, who were attracted to foundation jobs because they seemed to offer chances to put their ideals into practice. By the time such people fit comfortably into the philanthropic culture, they have long since lost the ability to detect the line between healthy compromise and brown-nosing. Thus they manage, without abandoning their personal decency and idealism, to do the bidding of a class whose only qualification for shaping social policy is an accident of birth or an ability to stockpile cash.

Foundation operatives must settle for serving as surrogate rich: They are easily lulled into imagining that the pockets into which their hands reach are their own. Skillful grants-getters tell them what they want to hear. The most flattering thing to say to a program officer is, "I wouldn't lie to you. You're different from the other foundation people. Why, I think of you as one of us."

A program officer is seldom confronted or contradicted, but always handled, coaxed, wooed. This leads to excessive confidence in one's judgment, and from there it is just a skip and a jump to terminal arrogance. Since foundations are now inundated with proposals from worthy organizations struggling to survive the dismantling of the public sector, their chief mission must be rejecting the vast majority. Looking down on the universe of potential grantees with Olympian detachment, in the philanthropic equivalent of natural selection, foundations must invent rationales to explain this huge tide of rejections. So they promulgate policies that supposedly lead to a rational selection of the fittest: Only organizations that can earn a certain percentage of their incomes are eligible; only organizations that have existed for a certain length of time; and so on.

In the end, the philanthropic culture has power to corrupt both its operators and its supplicants. The danger for foundation officers is that they will come to believe their own propaganda. The entire system is based on "knowing one's place." But knowing your place means one thing when that place is on top, looking down, and quite another when it is on the bottom, trying to move on up.

A couple of years ago, I was invited to a roundtable discussion at yet another Major National Foundation. Almost all the participants were already recipients of the foundation's largesse. We were asked to review the results of a planning process from which, after many such meetings, there had emerged a pastiche of abstraction and postulation that would somehow become the guidelines for a brave new program.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Big, the division head responsible for scholarly and cultural giving, who

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The Politics of Simplicity

Jerome M. Segal

The idea of simple living has always been part of the American psyche—sometimes central, sometimes peripheral. Today, it once again resonates strongly throughout our popular culture. Newspapers carry full-page features on personal downsizing, and books on how to live well with less sell hundreds of thousands of copies. A Nexus search for articles on simple living reveals more than fifty entries in just the last two months. Moreover, the interest comes from all parts of society, not just among people on the counter-cultural fringes. For instance, *Working Woman*, an upscale magazine for the career-minded, with a circulation of close to a million, devoted its entire December issue to how to create a simpler life. There's a Simple Living Network on the Internet, several newsletters, and a host of itinerant lecturers, taped courses, and workshops.

Advocates of simple living are expressing a value orientation that overlaps in important ways with that of the politics of meaning. They reject the idea that the good life is to be found in ever-higher levels of consumption. They argue strongly against rampant careerism and materialism. They opt for less money, less work, more time with friends and loved ones.

Yet, for all that, the simple living enthusiasm is largely apolitical. Much, though not all, of the literature is of a "how-to" variety, offering advice on how to live more rewardingly with less money. Enthusiasts view the attainment of a simpler, more meaningful life as an individual project, not as a matter of collective politics.

In some ways this is to be admired. Far too often, politics on the Left, in its emphasis on the necessity of transforming fundamental structures of the social order, has had a paralyzing effect, the implicit message being that without large-scale, structural change, people can't make significant progress toward a better life.

Nevertheless, the absence of a "politics of simple living" tends to render the simple living movement a solution for the few, irrelevant for the many. Articles about high-flying professional couples who have cut back from $100,000 incomes have limited relevance for the half of American families that live on less than $40,000 a year. Some simple living advocates even adopt an attitude of disdain toward those who are just getting by. For instance, Amy Dacyczyn, the publisher of the Tightwad Gazette Newsletter, writes in a *New York Times* op-ed of how she feeds her family of eight on $170 a month, and then goes on to talk about "whiners" who are unwilling to give up their expensive lifestyles.

An apolitical simple living movement has a lot of appeal to Americans. It is increasingly a place where those disaffected from our dominant ethos end up. Yet, insofar as it is apolitical, simple living risks being conservative in its political implications, focusing inordinately on the ability and responsibility of the individual for the quality of his/her life. If the simple living idea remains largely individualistic, it will not only be irrelevant to most Americans—in the end it will disappear under the influence of the dominant forces in American life. It is as a form of politics, a politics that is both personal and social, that simple living has enormous potential for deeply and lastingly transforming life in America.

Simple living is not some 1990s fad. Nor is it the product of "foreign" ideologies. David Shi's book, *The Simple Life: Plain Thinking and High Living in American Culture* (Oxford, 1985), is must reading for those seeking historical grounding. From the earliest days of the American experience, advocates of simple living have challenged consumerism and materialism, although simple living, or "plain living," as it was sometimes called, has meant different things to different groups.

Puritan simplicity focused on religious devotion, a lack of ostentation, and plenty of hard work. It was not a leisure expansion movement. Nor was simple living a matter of individual choice for Puritans; sumptuary laws restricted consumption display, and economic life was regulated to limit the role of greed in human affairs.

In the worldview of the Quakers, simple living was modified somewhat. The sumptuary laws, which to some extent were designed to prevent those in the lower classes from affecting the manners of those above them, came to

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apply to all members of the community, and John Woolman, a leading Quaker in the mid-1700s, decried excessively lengthy workdays, and cautioned employers not to work others too hard. Indeed, Woolman made a powerful analytic connection in arguing that the institution of slavery emerged from a wrongheaded pursuit of a life of ease and luxury. Here, perhaps, we find the origins of a radical politics of plain living—the belief that if people adopted the simple life, all of society would be transformed.

In the mid-1700s, republican simplicity emerged. Its ideal was not the simple life of Jesus, an image that inspired many Christian advocates of plain living, but the classical writers Cicero, Tacitus, and Plutarch. Central figures of the revolutionary period, in particular Samuel Adams, were deeply concerned about the relationship between our political health and the individual pursuit of luxury. The rebirth of democracy in the world brought with it an interest in the Greek and Roman experiments, and why they disappeared. There was a concern (as there is today) with the virtue of office-holders. Genuine democracy seemed incompatible with too great a preoccupation with getting rich. There was great fear of the corrupting influences of unbridled commercialism. When the colonists boycotted British goods, it was not just a tactic of the independence movement; they viewed Britain as The Great Satan, exporting the corruptions of capitalism.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson corresponded about what were the bounds of the possible with respect to building a non-materialist society. Jefferson emphasized civic virtue and looked to public policy, in particular state-supported schools and values education. Adams viewed this as unrealistically "undertaking to build a new universe." He himself feared economic growth, and argued for preventing both extreme poverty and extravagant riches.

In the mid-1800s, the transcendentalist writers such as Emerson and Thoreau envisioned a new form of simple living. While the Puritans saw the virtues in opposition to the passions, the transcendentalists had a different vision. On one end of the spectrum, this period prefigured the 1960s, with communes, vegetarianism, nudism, and concern for animal rights. The advocates of transcendental simplicity reversed the Puritan emphasis on work. For Thoreau, one of the chief reasons for lowering consumption levels was that it allowed for greater leisure to do the better things in life—not religious or civic engagement, but the life of the mind, of art, literature, poetry, philosophy, and an almost reverential engagement with nature. In the main, the project of transforming society was put aside in favor of the experiential and experimental communities seeking the simple life for themselves.

Interest in simple living was harder to find in the post-Civil War period, but it re-emerged strong toward the



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turn of the century. There was a reaction against materialism, individualism, and the hectic pace of urban life. In those days, it was the *Ladies Home Journal* that led the charge against the dominant materialist ethos. Under a crusading editor, Edward Bok, the magazine served as a guide for those in the middle class seeking simplicity; by 1910, it had a circulation of close to 2 million, making it the largest selling magazine in the world. In this period there emerged a movement of aesthetic simplicity, centered around designers William Morris and Gustav Stickley, and giving rise to so-called "mission" furniture, much sought by antique dealers today.

One dimension of the renewed interest in simple living was a country life movement concerned with using modern technology to improve life for the small farmer and to keep young people on the farm. Later, in 1933, the Department of the Interior created a Division of Subsistence Homesteads to resettle the urban and rural poor in planned communities based on "handicrafts, community activities, closer relationships, and cooperative enterprises." About 100 such communities were established, most of them failing in their grand design to replace individualism with "mutualism."

After World War II, as after the First, the Civil War, and the Revolution, there was a surge in consumption,

and simple living receded into the background. But again, in the 1960s, there was a critique of the affluent lifestyle and a renewed interest in plain living. In the 1970s, with the energy crisis, the focus on plain living merged with a growing concern with the environment. The notion of "voluntary simplicity" emerged; the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, a how-to guide to a simpler, environmentally conscious life, sold briskly, and President Jimmy Carter invited E.F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful*, to the White House.

In his now-infamous "malaise" speech, Carter criticized the country, decrying that "we worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns." He called for a new cohesive, spiritually rich Commonwealth. The speech, viewed by most Americans as overly moralistic and pessimistic, caused Carter's popularity to plummet. Then came the Reagan and Bush years, during which acquisitiveness and material success, rather than simplicity, were the ideal. And now, in the Clinton era, there is a revival of interest in simple living.

At the heart of the various historical manifestations of the American impulse toward simple living is a rejection of consumptionism. But there has been considerable diversity with respect to the human good and the place of work, religion, civic engagement, nature, literature and the arts among these different visions. It is also the case that a concern with simple living was at some points largely apolitical, and at other times at the heart of a broader political and social vision. And just as one might argue that there is no single politics of meaning, so too there is no single politics of simple living. In the hands of the Puritans, it was almost totalitarian in its scope. At other points, it bordered on the libertarian.

It is important to distinguish poverty from simple living. The difference is not just a matter of the level of provision. Nor is it merely a question of whether or not the lifestyle is chosen. In conceptualizing the simple life, I favor the term "graceful simplicity." It combines two notions. Life is graceful in that it is unharried, and free from dominant fear and stress; the individual is cultivated and appreciative, rather than covetous. Life is simple in that the level of consumption is modest, and the human good is found largely in the simple pleasures of friends and family, a good book, a walk in the woods.

I envision a politics of simple living that is liberal in its core orientation, in the sense that it does not prescribe any particular view of wherein a meaningful life is to be found. Rather, it is defined by what it eschews—the pursuit of ever higher levels of income and consumption. It argues for creating an economic environment which is supportive of multiple forms of simple living. In this it builds on the individualist or communalist thrust of the contemporary interest in simple living which says that the real work of creating a meaningful life has to be done by people themselves, with their friends and in communities of shared values. At the same time, it views our national economic and social policies as playing a vital role in creating the background environment within which such projects will either succeed or fail.

A politics of graceful simplicity focuses on time, money, and work. It seeks a society in which ordinary people have:

- a high level of leisure time;
- the ability to satisfy core economic needs at low levels of personal income;
- economic security and dignified work.

Each of these desiderata is relatively concrete. They are the central features of an economic environment that supports simple living. The basic objective is to put the economic realm in its proper (i.e., limited) place and to make room for the rest of life. Each of these features of economic life can be achieved, or at least attempted, through a wide variety of policies and programs. A politics of simplicity should be defined by its commitment to achieving these broad goals, not by the specific programs that might be employed. We should be open and experimental about the means of getting there.

Even if our economic life were leisured, secure, and not excessively dependent upon high income levels, this would not be sufficient for the good, or happy, or meaningful life. It is not a matter of adding objectives. No set of social conditions ever can be sufficient; to every life there is an enormous personal dimension. Living well is an art that individuals and families must learn for themselves. Yet, there is all the difference in the world between a socio-economic order which is friendly and supportive of the human good, and one that undermines it at every turn. Identifying, and acting upon, these differences comprise the essence of public policy.

For most working Americans today, time is always too scarce to enjoy life fully. Between the demands of work and home—and, ironically, of "leisure time" itself—most of us feel harassed and harried. Historically, reduction in work hours signified economic progress. During much of the nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth century, workers, who often put in thirteen- or fourteen-hour days, struggled first to achieve the ten-hour, and then the eight-hour day. In the 1930s, there was talk of a thirty-hour week, but for over half a century, reducing work hours has receded as a social concern.

In the last few decades, as married women in large numbers entered the labor force, the family did not have

as an option two twenty-five-hour jobs. The choice was between one or two forty-hour jobs, and many families chose two. Households shifting from one person to two people working outside the home experienced an enormous increase in time pressure.

Since the 1950s, per-capita consumption in the United States has more than doubled, while for many, leisure has declined or remained stagnant. Without ever choosing, we have made the wrong choice; at least some of the productivity growth that enabled higher incomes and consumption should have gone instead to expanding leisure.

Isolated individuals cannot easily choose leisure rather than income growth. When, bucking the dominant trend, a family chooses time rather than income, it not only foregoes consumption, but finds that, relative to others, its economic standing declines. Such a decline is more profound than simply not keeping up with the upwardly mobile Joneses; it is a matter of slipping out of the socioeconomic community that has provided one's sense of place.

Our society needs to address decisions about altering the shape of work collectively. Just as we have legislation on the forty-hour week, so too we should have public debates to consider three-day weekends, reduced daily hours, and guaranteed extended vacations. On one level, expanding leisure time is the easiest policy change to make. In principle, one piece of legislation could dramatically transform life in America.

Expanding leisure time, for example through the introduction of a shorter work week, would have important implications that bear on the other two goals of a simple living movement. Provided that the costs of hiring people to work overtime were high, it would result in the creation of more jobs, thus improving economic security. A decision to expand leisure, however, would result in lower levels of income and consumption. The politics of leisure expansion requires that people be prepared to give up actual or potential income in exchange for more time. Surveys indicate that relatively few people are prepared to reduce their current income for more leisure, though quite a substantial number say they would willingly forego *future* gains in income in exchange for more leisure.

Why aren't more people willing to trade off some income for more leisure? The primary reason is that most people feel pressed at their current levels of income. Much of the literature on simple living seeks to convince people that the tightness of their budgets is illusory: If they thought more deeply about money and what it buys, they would see that they can cut back without much pain, and that whatever they would lose, it would be more than made up by what they would gain. There is much truth to this argument; if curling up with a good book became the dominant pleasure in American life, it would transform the society. At the same time, as I argued in a previous article in these pages ("Money and Our Economic Life," TIKKUN, November/December 1995), the financial pressure Americans feel comes from real causes. We need to confront the cost of living in America: Why does it cost so much to meet core needs? And what can be done about it?

The central social objective of a politics of simple living is a society in which fundamental human needs can be met at modest levels of income. For most Americans, their fundamental needs for safe neighborhoods, good education, transportation, economic security, and health care are either unmet, or can only be met when isolated households achieve high levels of income.

Except for the poor, the answer is not higher levels of personal income, but rather a search for solutions that do not rely upon individual income to meet all needs. Through shifts in public policy priorities, we can craft a society in which we do not need two cars to get to work, or a house in the suburbs to ensure our family's safety, or private schools to educate our children, or an IRA or a 401(k) to have economic security.

A politics of simple living brings to these familiar areas of policy interest a fuller perception of the problem and a new criterion for solutions. It is not just that people have needs which are not being met; our general approach to meeting needs has depended upon increasing personal incomes, which keeps us wedded to the income focus of American life.

Simple living offers a particular lens through which to approach areas of policy and social concern. It asks, "Will what's happening here result in a society in which we will need more or less personal income to meet central human needs?" For instance, how does the economic and social collapse of our cities affect the financial demands on those lucky enough to flee to private schools, safe neighborhoods, and two-car garages? This approach identifies the connections between our social and our economic life, and focuses attention on what has to be done so that modest income allows a family to support a decent life. It is not hostile to the expansion of the public sector, yet it does not view government as the only agent in achieving this goal.

Along with expanding leisure and reducing need-required income, the achievement of graceful simplicity requires change in our notions of income security and employment. There is nothing graceful about a life dominated by fear of losing income, or trapped in work devoid of dignity. To make lives of graceful simplicity possible, we need an economy in which our economic rights are enhanced. Most fundamentally, this includes a right to a job with income sufficient to meet core economic

needs. A graceful simplicity movement should not be dogmatic about specific programs for achieving that end. For instance, such a movement should be open-minded and experimental about such issues as raising the minimal wage, or expanding the earned-income-tax credit, or public-sector employment, or empowerment zones.

We are an aging society, and most of us will live longer than our parents. Across America, corporations are cutting back in their commitment to worker pensions, and the Social Security system is headed toward fundamental crisis as the baby boomers reach so-called "retirement age." If the response to a growing insecurity among middle-aged people about their future remains the "every man for himself, and woman too" approach of IRAs and 401(k)s, we will stay mired in the need to earn more.

A politics of plain living rejects that approach, and looks for new answers. Perhaps if we had radically shorter hours and different kinds of work, few would want to retire at all. This kind of politics turns the debate in new directions.

Dignity at work means many things. Some work lives are beneath human dignity, yet people of great dignity endure them to support their loved ones. In part, dignity has to do with power relations between worker and boss, and between men and women. But the issue of human dignity also has to do with the kind of work we are asked to perform. The problem is not that a specific task may be arduous, mechanical, or repetitive; the issue of human dignity is engaged when an entire work life is composed of such tasks. A work life that denies our individuality, our creativity, our moral and aesthetic sensibility is one that denies our dignity as human beings.

It may well be, as some have argued, that the continued introduction of new technologies will have a cleansing effect, eliminating repetitive, mechanical, or formulaic jobs. If so, it will offer half the solution. The other half lies in the creation of millions of meaningful jobs.

How do we, as a society, find ways of liberating people from income pressures, creating meaningful work, yet dealing successfully with the problems of unsafe neighborhoods, inadequate education, and inadequate housing? In an article last year in TIKKUN ("High Tech Populism," May/June 1995), Jeremy Rifkin put forward an intriguing suggestion that can be used to these ends. The government would issue income vouchers to individuals seeking jobs in the non-profit sector. These would be redeemed by the non-profits to cover the costs of training and placement in community-building jobs. Indeed, non-profit-sector employment could be dramatically increased with an even simpler policy change increasing the deduction for charitable giving to, say, 150 percent of the value, or changing it from a tax deduction that lowers taxable income to a tax credit that directly reduces the tax bill. Thus, the politics of simple living might suggest opposition to the flat tax, which would cut rates and eliminate deductions. An argument can be made for keeping tax rates the same or even raising them, and crafting credits and deductions to sustain lives of graceful simplicity. At the same time, unburdening ourselves from an approach to taxation that makes us bookkeepers of our own lives has a powerful appeal.

A simple living movement should not pretend to have all the answers, and indeed there is a danger of being prematurely programmatic. Graceful simplicity is essentially a vision that redefines what counts as personal and social progress in economic matters. It is an alternative to undue focus on growth, income, and consumption. Within that vision, there may emerge a multiplicity of policy agendas. Too much focus on how to get there, rather than on changing the consensus on where we want to go, runs the risk of reducing the goal to a shopping list of programs. What we need in America today is not primarily a new set of programs, but a rethinking of the fundamentals of economic life.

Let us assume that a politics of simplicity was successful, that we had a society in which leisure was ample, needs could be met with limited personal income, and jobs and income were secure. What difference would it make? I believe it would transform our social world. True, some people would watch more TV, but more important, it would lead to an outpouring of interest and energy for the things that really matter to people—enjoying their friends and family, the arts, learning, religion, political engagement, and volunteer work.

In a world in which there was an abundance of truly secure jobs that paid $20,000 for twenty-five hours of work, and in which this was sufficient to meet our needs, the place of employment would recede in our lives. The question, "What do you do?" would fade as a way of asking what you did for a living. Rather, it would be used to ask someone about the range of their activities. For some, being a musician or a writer or a political activist might coincide with producing a modest income; for others, these identities might be avocational, as they make their living working three days a week driving a bus.

A change of this sort would diffuse throughout our society, affecting schooling and childhood itself. Getting on the right track, deciding what you want to do (i.e., your "career path") would no longer dictate educational priorities to the extent that they do in the current system. We know this is so, because things were different just thirty years ago when many of us were young and there was a buoyant job market for college graduates. In its own way, this would be an opportunity society: not the opportunity

to get rich, but an abundance of opportunities to pursue life's experiences, and to do so without fear that if a wrong choice is made, there is no getting back on the train.

Is it possible to bring this about? A few years ago, the agenda proposed here, focusing on leisure, health, education, housing, and income security would not have seemed impossibly ambitious. Yes, it might (though not necessarily) mean a larger public sector; it might mean more rather than less taxes; it might mean new social programs, new efforts to make government work. But nothing proposed here is beyond what people in Congress were thinking about in the 1970s. The original form of the Humphrey-Hawkins Act contained an enforceable right to a job; this was stripped from the legislation when it passed in 1978. Former Congressman Donald Fraser of Minnesota (for whom I worked years ago) offered legislation to create job sabbaticals.

Today, we face a crisis in public finance and a general disbelief in the ability of government programs to deliver on their promises. If what we are talking about is returning to the unfinished liberal agenda, it is indeed unlikely that we will see it happen anytime soon.

But the politics of simple living is not about government programs, let alone those aimed at discrete social problems. Rather, it is about a comprehensive paradigm shift in our understanding of how the economic realm relates to the human good. The conventional, consumeristic conception tells us that enjoying economic bounty largely constitutes the good life; that work is important primarily because it serves as a means to goods and services; that a person's standard of living is thus measured by their level of consumption; and that the performance of the economic realm as a whole is primarily measured by the expansion of the collective pie—that is, by economic growth.

The simple living paradigm holds that the primary role of the economy is to satisfy core needs; beyond meeting those needs, economic progress enhances the good life insofar as it eliminates toil and expands leisure time. A hectic society with high levels of consumption and long hours of empty work is a society that is confused about the human good.

How, then, do we understand the relationship between a politics of plain living and a politics of meaning? As two different terms for the same perspective? As partially overlapping philosophies that can make common cause but remain distinct?

Both outlooks are critical of excessive concern with getting and spending and social status. Both reject the idea that an individual's worth is linked to income and wealth. Both see a human emptiness and poverty in a life centered around getting ahead and "making it."

Yet, the politics of meaning is a much more ambitious and much more encompassing outlook than the politics of simple living. And, I would argue, perhaps for those very reasons, it has less potential for actually transforming American life.

The politics of meaning focuses on the creation of a loving and caring society. It seeks to find such concern on all levels, be it within individual relationships or corporate behavior. The politics of plain living that I have advocated leaves open certain central elements of what constitutes the good life. It envisions an economic life in which, with relatively limited hours of paid employment, individuals and families can meet their central economic needs. This reordering of priorities then opens a space in which, secure from economic anxiety, people might pursue the good life as best they can find it, be it in relationships with friends and family, in service to others, in political struggle, in pursuit of knowledge, in the arts, in exploring a spiritual path.

As a form of politics, the politics of plain living is less expansive and less ambitious than a politics of meaning, which would assess social policy and practice, legislation and institutions by asking, "Does it produce human beings who are idealistic and caring, able to sustain loving and committed relationships?" The politics of simplicity keeps its eye on a few rather concrete socio-economic objectives. And, in doing so, it uses different language, and has, I believe, a very distinct appeal.

The focus is much more economic—on increasing leisure, limiting the growth of need-required income, and insuring income and employment security. This is not to say that the politics of plain living is at bottom about economic issues, or that it is a new check-list of liberal desiderata. Rather, it is about creating an economic environment that will enable, rather than undermine, people's ability to find lives that make sense.

If its agenda is more circumscribed and considerably less utopian than one that seeks a loving society, it nevertheless remains daunting, and is similarly subject to the charge that it goes well beyond what is realistic and possible. But, there is a difference. It may be implausible that we might be able to increase taxes so as to provide free higher education, or that we can devise government programs that will transform corporations into loving relaters. But they constitute different kinds of implausibility. The politics of simplicity has a far more circumscribed sense of what is politically viable.

The vocabulary and set of problems on which a politics of plain living centers are very concrete and relate directly to most people's daily struggles. As a political style, there is a marked difference between focusing on why it is that we experience a time famine, and why it is that we

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Twelve Points of Unity for the Politics of Meaning

The Foundation for Ethics and Meaning

The essence of the approach of the politics of meaning is defined in Michael Lerner's book, The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism *and in Peter Gabel's writings as they appear in* TIKKUN *magazine, now compiled in a reader available from* TIKKUN. *The Foundation for Ethics and Meaning sees this work as the definitive source for building a politics of meaning. Many of the ideas derive from the experience of the second wave of feminism, but also from the deepest wisdom of the spiritual and religious traditions of the human race.*

Many people have asked us if they have to agree with these founding documents in their entirety. Our answer: of course not. These documents define an approach. Yet, people have subsequently pressed us about what aspects of these documents they would have to agree with in order to represent themselves as speaking from a politics-of-meaning perspective. Reluctantly, we have drafted the following twelve points of unity in response to this request. Our reluctance stems from our understanding that the politics of meaning is far more nuanced and complex than these twelve points indicate. Nevertheless, they do provide a basic guideline to the movement's fundamental principles.

1 We live in a remarkable moment in human history—a moment in which the long-term goals of the human race for the past three thousand years (to establish a society based on love, caring, mutual respect, and solidarity) have suddenly become the short-term survival requirements for the planet and for the human race. We are grateful to be alive at this moment, and we celebrate the grandeur of magnificence of the universe and thank God for having created and sustained it.

Our task is to reject the ethos of selfishness and materialism in American society, and the alleged common sense that teaches us that "looking out for number one" is the only rational way to survive. We do not condemn human beings for being caught in these dynamics. We are not a movement of elitists who think that we are on a higher moral plane than other Americans. On the contrary, we recognize that in the way our society is structured, virtually everyone learns that s/he must be selfish and materialistic in order to survive in our economic marketplace. No wonder, then, that most of us have internalized this ethos, and many have come to believe that this is the only rational way to be.

Yet when everyone is rewarded for pursuing narrow material self-interest without regard to the consequences of others, the result is a world in which resources are squandered and the life support system of the planet is threatened by reckless exploitation of the world's resources and disregard for ecological concerns.

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with self-interest, but in our society the pursuit of our own self-interest too often requires a disregard for the well-being of others. This is what we mean by selfishness. It is in everyone's self-interest to live in a society where people are not as much motivated by short-term material self-interest as is the case in contemporary advanced industrial societies.

We affirm the possibility of restructuring our society in ways that would replace the dominant ethos of selfishness and materialism with an ethos of caring, idealism, and spiritual solidarity.

2 We seek to change the "bottom line" in America from selfishness to caring, and from materialism to spiritual and ethical sensitivity to others. We seek to change the definition of productivity and efficiency, so that they are no longer defined solely in terms of maximization of wealth and power, but are defined in broader terms that include the degree to which the given institution or social practice in question tends to create ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive human beings who are capable of sustaining loving relationships and friendships.

The struggle to change the bottom line in this way will have profound ramifications for American society. Every social practice and every public institution will have to be reconfigured when they are forced to ask themselves, "How much does our current practice actually tend to produce human beings who are more loving and caring, more ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive?"

This is not just a matter of a change of consciousness or a new language. The process we are describing will involve profound transformations of every economic and political institution. Yet, we are well aware of the indeterminacy of consequences of profound social change, so we envision the process as one that will continue for many generations, not something to be imposed by government or by some all-knowing technocrats, but a democratic process, suffused with checks and balances, and shaped by a populace that is

consciously involved in recreating our world to accord with our highest ethical and spiritual ideals.

3 The ethical, spiritual, and psychological needs of human beings (including, but not restricted to: the need for loving connection with others, the need to be part of ethically and spiritually grounded communities of meaning, the need for loving friendships and strong families, the need to live in a world in which each person is recognized as precious and valuable, the need to live in a world based on justice and peace, and the need to have work that actualizes our intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capacities) are as central to a decent life as our need for economic security and individual freedom.

4 People are oppressed when these ethical, spiritual, and psychological needs are systematically frustrated, regardless of their membership in a particular ethnic, racial, sexual, national or religious community or their economic status. This form of oppression is equally important as other forms of economic or political oppression. We reject the attempt to create "hierarchies" of oppression, or to build social movements on the notion that one form of oppression is more important than another. Rather, we support all the various attempts to eliminate oppression. We are aware of the danger that in acknowledging the centrality of ethical, spiritual and psychological oppression, some people will take this as a warrant to turn their backs on those who are economically oppressed or those whose political or individual rights have been systematically frustrated or denied. We have no intention to abandon the struggle for economic justice and political rights.

What we intend to block, however, is the political situation, frequently encountered in liberal and progressive circles, in which someone gets up at a meeting and announces that the people in the room are really "privileged" and that there aren't enough of the "truly oppressed" in the room. The impact of this dynamic, discounting the people who are there and making them feel "inferior to" some other group, is not only politically self-destructive (because many people don't want to be part of that kind of a movement where they are being treated as implicitly less valuable than others), but also wrong (because based on a failure to understand the reality of the ethical, spiritual, and psychological oppression that we talk about as "the deprivation of meaning").

5 Because we recognize that the meaning crisis affects everyone in the society, we seek to emphasize the commonality of all human beings. We reject most forms of "identity politics" and the attempts to privilege "difference" as the central notion of progressive politics. We are well aware that class differences, racial differences, and gender differences remain significant terrains of oppression, and in each of these we support those who seek to achieve equality of respect and equality of political and economic power. But we are also aware of the multiplicity of identities that each of us holds, and the ways that most people are both victims and victimizers. We believe that everyone in the society loses a great deal by being part of a system that valorizes selfishness and materialism and fosters narcissistic personality traits. No amount of material compensation is sufficient to offset the tremendous pain and spiritual disability that we all share by virtue of our participation in this kind of world. Because every human relationship is somewhat distorted by living in this society, every person has the potential to become part of a liberatory transformative movement. So we reject the style of politics that writes others off just because they disagree with us, or that implicitly puts them down just because in some respects they get material or power benefits from the existing system of oppression. The politics of meaning movement is meant to be open to all who agree with its principles. We reject the style of doing politics that seems to suggest that the "real" people who must be part of our movement are those who are economically or politically oppressed, covertly giving the message to others that their participation isn't so important (because, after all, they are only "white" or "men" or "heterosexual," or some other category that is not "as oppressed" as the "most oppressed"). We reject this thinking and all of its corollary principles in terms of organizing.

We also reject the attempts to make "inclusion" a defining notion of progressive politics. We live in a society based on cynicism, selfishness and materialism. Too often in the past years, progressive politics has appeared to be concerned with little beyond getting opportunities for previously excluded groups so that they could be as selfish, materialistic, and cynical as everyone else. Of course, we support the ending of all forms of discrimination and inequality, and so support the right of everyone to equal participation in the ethos of selfishness and materialism. We don't believe that previously excluded groups should be required to live by a higher ethos than everyone else, and we don't want to use the selfishness in the society as an excuse to allow the continuation of any form of discrimination. So, we support inclusion, just as we support higher wages for workers. These are important battles to fight while living in the current society, and we will support them. But pardon us if we don't get very excited about a politics of inclusion any more than we get excited about a politics of raising wages—it just doesn't speak deeply enough to the central problems we face.

We have a strong commitment to struggles against sexism, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and class oppression. In our view, each of these is a way of not seeing others as created in the image of God. Once one recognizes the preciousness and sanctity of all other human beings, and the absolute requirement to treat them as such, one is impelled to struggle

against social arrangements which give some people disproportionate power, wealth, and cultural capital, which they can use to dominate others. So, it is not inclusion, but social justice that we seek.

We are aware of the very important work being done by diversity trainers who help people to see others as created in the image of God. Moreover, we understand that the affirmation of particular identities may be an important part of the process through which we are able to come into caring contact with others, a step outside of the extreme individualism of the contemporary world. The affirmation of one's own particular cultural or ethnic heritage can become a window into the experience of others and their particularity. So, we do want to affirm the reality of each group's particular pain. We do not want to create a politics that recognizes the pain of the deprivation of meaning while ignoring the pain experienced by the suppression of particular ethnic, racial, sexual, national, or religious communities. To refuse, as we do, to make this the central notion of our politics does not mean that we have to go to the other extreme and forget or underplay all the important lessons we've learned about the way that majorities tend too easily to forget the suffering that this society has inflicted on minorities of all sorts.

Similarly, in rejecting most versions of identity politics, we do not want to underplay another important insight which we affirm. We have much to learn from the wisdom of the various minority traditions in the United States and from the wide variety of cultures and traditions of the human race. We are committed to seeking diversity within our movement—not out of guilt for what we have done to minorities or diverse cultures, but because we know we can learn from each other's wisdom, culture, and accumulated experience. Precisely for that reason, the diversity we seek should not be defined solely in terms that have been popular in the liberal culture—namely, diversity of groups that have been systematically oppressed. While they, too, are an important component of the diversity we seek, our notion of diversity must be much wider. We want our diversity to include Southern Baptists, Mormons, Catholics, Evangelicals, Orthodox Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus; we want it to include Italians, Poles, Serbs, Germans, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese and people from African and Asian countries; we want it to include people who are miners, truck drivers, insurance salespeople, waitresses, secretaries, computer experts, lawyers, college professors, poets, construction workers, farm workers and members of the armed services and government employees and independent farmers, small businesspeople, leaders of major corporations, people who have been downsized out of employment, child-care workers, teachers, post office employees and ...well, you get the point: Diversity is not just the politically correct categories, but also economic, geographical, and cultural diversity.

6 We seek a cross-class alliance between middle-income people and the poor and powerless. Liberal and progressive forces have often focused most of their attention on speaking to and for the needs of the economically or politically rights-deprived. But that has not yielded a cross-class alliance, because in the process, the Left has given a message to middle-income people that suggests that their needs are to be valued less. White men, in particular, have often felt that they had to be on the defensive for being born white and male, and to endure suggestions that they as individuals were responsible for the oppression of everyone else. This way of doing politics is mistaken and self-defeating. It turns people away from a progressive orientation and hence makes it impossible to build the kind of cross-class alliance that would help the poor and the powerless.

What makes this a progressive politics of meaning is that it both rejects the sexism, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia of the Right and the pandering to narrow material self-interests of the middle class. In our view, to pay serious attention to the meaning needs of middle-income people requires a societal assault on the ethos of selfishness and materialism—and this can only be done by reversing the narrowing of our circles of concern and attention.

Instead, we need to broaden our circles of caring, so that we build a world in which people care about each other, both locally and globally.

Our task is to show people that the kind of world they want to have in their most intimate personal relations, in their families, and with their friends, is a world that cannot be obtained without reversing the selfishness that lets us close our ears to the pain of others, whether they be in America's inner cities or in the refugee camps or city slums of Africa and Asia. An ethos of caring and love is the only solution to our most basic problems, and that can only be accomplished through building a world based on love and caring.

7 We are a progressive pro-families force. We include in our definition of families non-traditional family forms, including single-parent families, gay and lesbian families, and families without children.

We believe that the primary building block for a society is not the isolated individual entering into relationship with others through voluntary contract, but human beings already deeply intertwined and interdependent with others from the moment of conception and throughout the rest of our lives. It is this rich network of interdependence which we seek to validate and support in opposition to the ethos of individualism and "looking out for number one" that is embedded in the competitive marketplace.

In our view, right-wingers who champion the family are deeply misguided, not only because they do not recognize as legitimate the diversity of forms that family life takes, but also

and primarily because they do not recognize how the very economic institutions that the Right supports, with their deep enmeshment in an ethos of materialism and selfishness, are the main subverters of loving relationships and of family life. We are committed to helping people build stronger relationships and families, both by supporting the obviously necessary traditional social democratic agenda (full employment, a family wage capable of supporting a family at a comfortable standard of living, housing, health care, child care, family leave, and adjustments in work schedules to permit conscientious parenting) and by waging a deeper campaign against the biggest enemy of family life: the materialism and selfishness of the competitive market.

At the same time, we reject attempts to coerce people to remain in oppressive relationships. Strong families and lasting relationships depend on free choice, and that is only possible if single people are treated with respect and do not feel coerced into relationships, if people in relationships feel adequate social support to get out of them when they become abusive or oppressive, and if women do not face economic conditions that make them feel they must be in families in order to survive economically. Many of these points are presented in the Covenant with American Families developed by TIKKUN magazine. But we also reject the tendency in some circles on the Left to approach "family" with such a degree of suspicion that all they can talk about is how the current family form is oppressive. We want to acknowledge that whatever the defects of many contemporary families, the aspiration that leads most Americans to want to support families, namely the desire to have an institution totally dedicated to providing love and safety for individuals regardless of their accomplishments in the larger world, deserves to be respected and honored.

8 We support social responsibility—an ethos of caring for others that must be manifest at the individual, corporate, and governmental level. This means that we reject the model of a movement that focuses only on what others should do, while leaving ourselves free to pursue our own narrow, self-indulgent agenda. A movement for social responsibility must start with serious self-scrutiny and a commitment to personal integrity. Yet we also know the dangers of such a movement, which we recently witnessed in the "political correctness" phenomenon: the temptation for everyone to bash everyone else for not being morally transformed or meaning-oriented or spiritually sensitive "enough." So we start with a commitment to personal integrity, repentance, and an ongoing willingness to take personal responsibility, but reject coercive communal mechanisms that would impose morality on individuals and would eliminate the important and still-needed private space, free from communal scrutiny or invasion.

On the corporate level, we call for a new bottom line as described above. We seek to create a market system in which economic institutions function within a framework of community-determined rules, values, and relationships. We will work for measures to reward those firms that operate by the principle of social responsibility, and to punish those that do not. We will also work to reform the system of finance to create a more equitable distribution of capital ownership, greater accountability of capital to people and communities, longer-term investment perspectives, and more equitable sharing of work and opportunities for leisure.

We believe that government should be a vehicle for our collective caring for each other, and this requires that political institutions be democratically accountable and that governmental administrative institutions transcend the bureaucratic aloofness and insensitivity to the public that characterizes too many governmental bureaucracies, whether federal, state, or local. We wish to see government return to a spirit of public service that overtly manifests caring and respect for citizens—not just "objectively" (by delivering services or money), but "subjectively" (by the way it treats the people whom it deals with directly). We do not, however, support cavalier attempts to downsize government by the reckless dismantling of social programs for the poor and powerless and the removal of public controls on private profiteering at the expense of ethical or ecological sensibilities. Nor do we support an ethos of privatization that seems to suggest that caring for one another is no longer a shared responsibility, but merely another voluntary market choice among many possible choices we might decide to pursue in personal life.

We believe that caring for each other is a central defining moral obligation, and that our economic, governmental, and civil institutions must be shaped to maximize the ways that caring is given public expression. At the same time, we support the separation of powers and the protections of civil liberties that have been won through decades of courageous struggle by liberals and civil libertarians. We also support democratization of the public sphere, including severe restrictions on the role of capital in public campaigns, the opening of all public media to a wide variety of opinions and political parties (not just the two "major parties"), and measures to make it easier for citizens to put new parties on the ballot and to put citizen-initiated ballot measures to public referenda. Many of these points are spelled out more fully in the Social Responsibility Initiative (printed in the May/June 1996 issue of TIKKUN magazine), and those who speak for the politics of meaning are committed to the specifics of that proposal.

9 A politics of meaning is not about conventional politics—it is about challenging the ethos of selfishness and materialism wherever it distorts our lives. Just as the women's movement did not rely upon big government to legislate an end to inequality in personal relationships, so we do not intend to rely on government to rectify the many distortions in daily life caused by the ethos of

selfishness and materialism. So, despite all the attempts of others to reduce this movement to an attempt to impose a particular religious or ethical or psychological vision on the society by using big government to shove things down people's throats, we insist that we are not primarily interested in using government as a vehicle for establishing a meaning-oriented society. "The politics" of "the politics of meaning" refers to a broader conception of politics—politics not as the attempt to run for office or grab power, but as the activity of a community collectively defining its own goals and institutions (an activity that can often take place in civil society without any connection to the state).

The process of making changes in civil society involves consciousness-raising and it involves concrete struggles to change the bottom line in many economic and social institutions. There will be moments when government may be useful to advance this process (for example, in providing tax incentives for corporations that issue a yearly "ethical impact report" as envisioned in the Social Responsibility Initiative). But most of the changes will take place through democratic reconstruction of our social practices and social institutions in a more direct way. For example, we envision unions beginning to expand their focus to address meaning issues, both in the way they conduct their own meetings and in the issues they raise in collective bargaining. Or, we imagine teachers and parents shifting school curricula so that teaching empathy becomes a central focus. We envision the public demanding that media be less cynical, and beginning to support those media that no longer assume that people are only motivated by narrow short-term material self-interest. Similarly, we envision community mobilizations to reshape corporate priorities, in the process aiding those inside corporations who very much wish to support corporate social responsibility but who have previously felt that this was utopian when they did not have the support of a public movement pushing in this direction. We envision people in every workplace doing their own conscious reshaping of work, just as we envision them taking positive actions to introduce ethical and spiritual sensibilities in the institutions that they create and sustain in private life.

There is no one correct strategy. "Power to the imagination" remains one of the elements in a politics of meaning perspective. For that reason, a politics of meaning will encourage the development of art, music, dance, and celebration as a central part of its practice. Our serious commitment to political and economic change must be matched by an equally serious commitment to building a way of doing politics that expresses joy, affirms pleasure, and encourages playfulness and mutual delight in each other.

10 We are committed to a policy of compassion, not only for those who are our actual or likely allies, but also for those with whom we disagree and those who are unlikely to ever join in our social movements. Our politics derives from a recognition that every human being is created in the image of God (or, in secular language, that every human being is fundamentally valuable and, in Kantian terms, an "end" and not merely a "means" to someone else's ends). This commits us to valuing even those who are taking actions that we find oppressive or destructive—we oppose the action, but continue to recognize and value the people involved. So we reject the tendency to demean those with whom we disagree, though we encourage vigorous struggle against viewpoints that we believe to be misguided or mistaken.

A policy of compassion leads us to put the following question at the forefront of our thinking about how to deal with those with whom we disagree: "What are the legitimate needs that underlie these mistaken politics, and how do we separate that part from policies that we see as hurtful?" As applied to the American Right, this leads us to acknowledge that many people move to the Right because the Right is speaking to the meaning needs, albeit in a distorted way (by blaming the selfishness and materialism in American life on African Americans, gays and lesbians, feminists, Jews, immigrants, and on liberals who are supposedly using big-government programs to pander to the alleged selfishness of the aforementioned groups). As applied to the American Left and liberals, this leads us to acknowledge that much of the suspicion of "meaning" and "community" and of any religious or ethical approach is based on the quite legitimate supposition that this language has been used in the past as a cover for racist, sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic practices that we ought to reject. While we reject the Left's anti-spiritual biases, we do honor their commitment to ensure that these kinds of oppressions will not be covertly slipped back into popular discourse, or that the struggle against sexist, racist, and homophobic practices will not be undermined, in the name of a meaning orientation. So, while we are not a movement of the Left or the Right, we believe that there are lessons to be learned from both political camps, as well as much to be rejected.

Most of us wish to live in a world in which we can actualize our highest ideals, but few of us believe that that is ever going to be possible in "the real world." Our movement seeks to change that assessment by challenging our common-sense conception of what is realistic and by encouraging each of us to take more action and give greater public visibility to the most caring and loving parts of ourselves.

We wish to encourage a flood of gratuitous acts of kindness and caring, as well as public struggles to remake our social and economic institutions in ways that will reward ethical and spiritual sensitivity and behavior. Yet at each stage in the building of our movement we will consciously resist those who would introduce ruthless self-doubting and self-

blaming, manifested in accusations against each other or ourselves that "we aren't compassionate enough." We must be compassionate not only to others, but to ourselves as we build a compassionate movement.

Compassion has sometimes been used by liberals as a code word for additional social programs for the poor. While such programs may sometimes be useful, we use this word in a quite different sense—one that calls for active caring and involvement with other human beings—not a detached commitment, stemming from one's sense of guilt about the suffering of others, which leads to blanket support for higher taxes and social programs that pour money in place of actual involvement and caring. A meaning-oriented compassion means real connection, not detached and distanced support for social programs run by someone else for someone else that we neither know nor care about.

11 We believe that American life would be greatly enriched by an infusion of wisdom from the world's spiritual and religious traditions. While we support First Amendment protections against the establishment of any particular religious tradition, and oppose any attempts to use public institutions to privilege any particular religious tradition, we support a deepening of American public life through learning from and drawing upon the rich insights derived from a spiritual orientation toward the world.

We approach the task of bringing a spiritual and religious sensibility into our practice as a social movement with joy and with caution. Joy, because we believe that such a movement will allow us to approach politics with a wholesome integration that liberal politics has heretofore eschewed. Caution, because we are well aware of racist, sexist, homophobic, hierarchical, and paranoid elements that have been incorporated into many religious traditions in the past. We are committed to making our movement welcoming to those who feel uncomfortable with traditional religious and spiritual concerns, but who share with us an understanding of the sanctity of human beings and the need to overcome a technocratic consciousness.

In particular, we reject the technocratic framework that tends to see everything, including people and the planet, as "resources" that are to be judged valuable to the extent that they can produce something for somebody. A spiritual orientation encourages that we look at the world not only for what it can do for us, but also from the standpoint of awe, wonder and amazement at the overwhelming grandeur and beauty of the universe. It is this same sense of awe and wonder that is central to how we orient ourselves toward other human beings, thereby rejecting a market-consciousness that teaches us to see others primarily in terms of what we can "get" from them.

Liberal politics in particular has urged people to leave their religious or spiritual beliefs at the door when they enter progressive political arenas. A progressive politics of meaning does the opposite, urging people to bring their deepest truths with them, to embrace them, and to share them with all of us.

We will build a spiritually oriented politics that seeks to build a world in which this awe, wonder, and amazement is a central part of daily life, and in which work, family life, media, and societal institutions give people time, space, and encouragement to pay attention to this dimension of reality.

In this same spirit, we will challenge the anti-religious and anti-spiritual tendencies in some circles of the Left and in many circles of the technocratic center of American politics and American media. People who are part of the politics of meaning movement do not have to be personally involved in a religious community or spiritual practice, but we do reject the pervasive hostility to religious and spiritual realities that is part of important sections of liberal and progressive culture.

In particular, people who work in our politics of meaning community should be willing to participate in creating new forms of celebration—celebration both of each other's contribution to building a more loving and healing world, and also celebration of the grandeur of the universe. We will not tolerate the re-creation within our movement of a fiercely secular attitude that sneers at or resists the introduction of spiritual reflection and celebration, prayer, and thanksgiving, in the midst of our activities. We understand that attempting to create a spiritual space for communal celebration that at the same time does not impose upon anyone any particular religious tradition is going to be a creative and innovative task—but we are committed to adding that dimension to what would otherwise be a detached-from-body-and-soul kind of politics.

12 We reject the anti-leadership tendencies that have crippled so many liberal and progressive movements in the past several decades. We are well aware of the misuse of power that has sometimes accompanied unchecked political leadership, particularly in mainstream politics. But in the meantime, in social-change circles, the pendulum has swung too much in the opposite direction, and progressive social-change movements are often self-crippling because they subvert their own leaders through endless attacks, gossip, and disrespectful behavior. In other parts of the political spectrum, these problems may be offset by leaders receiving hefty salaries and public acclaim. But in the progressive movements, most people who provide leadership do so at their own expense, and often at the expense of loss of career opportunities and recognition by established academic, political, and journalistic forms of social credibility. Given this reality, it becomes extremely difficult to keep people involved in social-change movements when they realize that their willingness to give of themselves and their talents not only sets them up for attack by those opposed to these movements, but also by those within the movements who share similar goals.

In the politics of meaning movement, we oppose the

tendency to attack leaders. While we believe that leadership can be subjected to useful critique and adjustment, we believe that the conditions of safety for giving that critique must be set with great sensitivity to the humanity of leaders. Moreover, we believe that it is a perfectly legitimate goal of our movement to help provide gratification of legitimate needs for support, appreciation, recognition, acknowledgment, not only of leaders but of everyone who is engaged in the movement.

We want to make leadership in our movement a desirable position rather than an invitation for attack and subversion. For that reason, we will give great attention to responding to attacks on our leadership from people on the Left, the Right, and the cynical middle who use these attacks on individuals to avoid a serious confrontation with the powerful ideas that these leaders are advancing. We expect people who are part of this movement to support their leaders publicly and to challenge others who engage in put-downs of our leaders or our core ideas (e.g., these points of unity).

As in every other of these points of unity, this one can be taken too far. We do not want to give leaders a blank check, nor do we want to support wild ego-tripping. As in so much else, this is a question of establishing a balance, of finding the mean between extremes, and of rectifying what are today unprecedented imbalances that flow from a history of anti-leadership in the progressive world, itself derived from its historical opposite. There are never absolute formulas for finding balance and the mean between the extremes, so the best we can hope for is to develop practical wisdom as we develop through the coming years.

If you agree with the Points of Unity, you are invited to join the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning. The Foundation does the following:

- Develops policy papers that show how the politics of meaning can translate into concrete social policies;
- Leads a national campaign to challenge media cynicism;
- Trains leadership to understand and articulate the politics of meaning perspective;
- Creates national and regional conferences which bring together people engaged in meaning-oriented social change work;
- Challenges the Right's claim to be the only pro-family, pro-God, pro-values force in the society—and challenges the sexism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-Semitism that persists in some sectors of the society;
- Promotes local study groups and other local activities to promote a politics-of-meaning perspective.

FURTHER INVOLVEMENT:

1. Read *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism* by Michael Lerner. If your local bookstore is unable to carry it (available from Addison-Wesley publishers), send us $26 and we'll send you a copy. Then, read Peter Gabel's collected writings on the politics of meaning (send a check for $8 and we will send them to you).

2. Join or form a local chapter. Participate in a local Foundation Training, to be offered in most regions at least once a year. And come to the National Summit on Ethics and Meaning in 1997 (details in future issues of TIKKUN).

3. Receive advanced training—if you wish to be a leader of a local chapter, or if you wish to use a meaning-orientation in your own work or as a meaning consultant. To apply for the advanced training, send a letter describing what you like (and what you don't) in *The Politics of Meaning*, how it applies to you, and what you'd like to do with the training. The first available advanced training is August 27-30. See the inside back cover for details.

To join: We request an annual donation of 1/2 of 1 percent of your annual income, or at least $100, whichever is greater, for membership. If your annual income is below $10,000, you may join for a donation of $50.

We also request that members become subscribers to TIKKUN magazine. TIKKUN is the place where we hold many of the debates and discussions about how to build a politics of meaning perspective. To keep up with the discussions in the Foundation, please subscribe to TIKKUN.

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SPECIAL FOCUS II: THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON ETHICS AND MEANING

Meaning Matters

More than 1,700 people gathered in Washington, D.C. last April 14-16 for the first National Summit on Ethics and Meaning. By the time this magazine is in your hands, thousands more will have come together at regional summits in Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Ann Arbor, Portland, and Los Angeles.

The written word cannot capture the excitement that these events generate for attendees, who find themselves with others who share the desire to build a politics of meaning movement. Many people who attended the three-day National Summit describe the exhilarating experience of finding a movement in which they could fully claim both their progressive politics and their religious or spiritual commitment. Transcripts of speeches or panel discussions can only hint at the level of energy and the flow of ideas that the Summit created.

Yet the selections we've assembled below can give readers a sense of the range of issues and perspectives at the Summit. Many speakers take the politics of meaning ideas and add dimensions and insights that will deepen our understanding. It is our fervent hope that in the coming years, those writers, thinkers, and activists, joined by many others—including you, our readers—will participate in the process of developing these ideas, applying them in novel and creative ways.

At the same time, it is important to underscore that some of the speakers at the Summit do not reflect a politics of meaning perspective. There are those who take a traditional liberal stance, focusing on economic and legal inequities and privation without broadening their definition of oppression to include an understanding of the frustration of ethical, spiritual, and psychological needs that we call the deprivation of meaning. Even some of those activists who pursue social change from a religious perspective are inclined to use biblical texts to bolster the standard liberal agenda, rather than seeking to broaden that agenda by acknowledging the crisis of meaning in contemporary American life. Sometimes you hear in these talks a reversion to traditional identity politics of the sort to which the politics of meaning seeks to be an alternative.

So, in what follows, you won't necessarily find an explication of the politics of meaning as it's been developed in TIKKUN, in articles by such writers as Michael Bader, Peter Gabel, and Michael Lerner, or in Michael Lerner's book, *The Politics of Meaning*. Instead, we present here a record of a variety of responses to and interpretations of these ideas. It is part of our notion of serious intellectual exchange that we encourage people with different and sometimes opposing perspectives to present their ideas, and that is precisely what we did at the Summit.



We are offering only a small portion of the National Summit's rich, exciting, and intellectually stimulating conversation. Technical failures resulted in our inability to tape and hence to transcribe some memorable sessions and speakers. Space limitations in TIKKUN prevent us from printing a great many of the sessions we do have on tape. Nevertheless, in this issue of TIKKUN and in the next, we bring you a representative sample of our speakers.

Full sets of the taped sessions, as well as tapes of individual sessions, are available from Sound Horizons, at 1-800-524-8355.

And, if you'd like to participate in the ongoing process of building the politics of meaning community, join the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning. (See p. 32 for membership information.) □

PHOTO BY RICK REINHARD

PLATFORM FOR A POLITICS OF MEANING

Law and the Politics of Meaning

Nanette Schorr

I'm an attorney working in a legal services office in the South Bronx. My primary practice area is representing parents whose children are involved with the foster-care system.

The kinds of questions raised before this forum have been in the minds of both our most eminent jurists and those for whom exposure to the law was only a passing stage in the development of a humanistic philosophy.

As Mohandas Gandhi stated in his autobiography:

> I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. This lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromise of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby—not even money; certainly not my soul.

So many people are attempting to address the kinds of questions that are being addressed in this forum today—in preparation for this talk I reviewed articles and books that spoke in many different paradigms—the critical legal studies movement, feminist jurisprudence, the legal storytelling and empathy in the law movements, the law and context and law and policy movements, movements that I would suspect many practicing lawyers are unfamiliar with.

Yet, there is something about having this conversation at this conference, in the context of an effort to engage society on multiple levels around the concept of a politics of meaning, an effort that I have partaken in, that makes having this discussion here, and me being a spokesperson for that discussion as *part* of that larger effort, something qualitatively different; for the most common objection I hear to legal reform proposals is that it would require a differently functioning national community for those reforms to be effective, and my response can now be: We're envisioning a world where change is occurring on multiple levels in tandem, so that we need not speak of legal reform in isolation from other change, though we will be implementing these changes in a world in flux that has not yet fully absorbed a politics of meaning, and in that sense the reforms are risky ones.

The question at this panel today is how do we reform legal institutions in ways that address the concerns of those who feel disillusioned with the legal system, with lawyers as representatives of that system, or with their own professional lives if they are attorneys. This is a discussion not just about institutional reform, but about the effect of legal practice on the souls of practitioners.

I am part of the group that defines ourselves as public-interest lawyers, since I work in a law office that represents indigent people and is funded by the government. We public-interest lawyers tend to separate ourselves from the rest of legal practitioners because of what we define as our social consciousness, and because of the ends we are trying to achieve. Yet, not all public-interest legal work is designed at ending oppressive or discriminatory practices, or at protecting against arbitrary or neglectful governmental behavior, and even if much of it is, sometimes public interest lawyers are simply representing private individuals with very private goals who cannot afford to hire an attorney. Yet, we practice in the same courts, and often in the same ways, that other lawyers practice; and our goal, as theirs, is to obtain our clients' ends at all costs. So, while I honor the work and commitment of public-interest lawyers in our struggle against poverty, injustice, and discrimination, I propose that we public-interest lawyers reintegrate ourselves into the rubric of the legal profession and talk about repairing our own practice in the same ways that lawyers in other parts of the profession need to repair theirs.

Legal culture reinforces thinking that equates justice for one's own client with justice per se, with "justice" being defined as the course which benefits one's own client. Yet, when advocates achieve a result they believe violates their sense of justice, regardless of whether it helps or hurts their cause, whether they are troubled by it or proudly attribute it to their legal acumen, these advocates' souls—that is, their integrity, or sense of self—are affected.

Nanette Schorr is a family law attorney in New York City specializing in child welfare issues.

Legal culture says it is immaterial whether there is any connection between a lawyer's personal belief in a cause and the words used to advocate that cause, so that while a lawyer argues compellingly, one cannot assume the lawyer believes what she is saying.

In many of the country's large law firms, work has become highly specialized and economic productivity the primary measure of value, depriving lawyers of a feeling of pride in their craft and connection to their work community. While lip service is paid to the notion that a good lawyer is a devoted citizen who cares for the public good and is willing to sacrifice for it, law firm hours are so long and enervating that it is difficult to find either the time or energy to do so.

The same qualities that contribute to being a good citizen—a commitment to creation of political community, a sympathetic treatment of the values of others, a willingness to stand up to injustice (and that is a word we need to reintroduce into legal discourse and recognize it is not naive or unsophisticated to use that term), ethical principles—make a good lawyer. Yet, the organization of legal practice makes it difficult for lawyers to honor their own values.

As lawyers, we are frequently faced with dilemmas which force us to violate *one* of our central commitments—to our clients, whose interests we are bound to represent zealously, or to our own sense of what is good in society. This dilemma is not unique to legal practice—it arises in many other contexts, where institutions and ethical codes require professionals to act in ways they feel are not good for society or for themselves.

The dilemma is resolved in our legal culture in the following way: A lawyer is expected to put her clients' interests above all others, unless doing so would violate legal ethics or violate the law (such as jury tampering, or knowingly placing a client who is about to perjure himself on the witness stand). Yet, this resolution may be bad for society (for example, where clients pursue frivolous or very marginal claims), not only because of the impact on those forced to defend the suit and the public cost of the suit, but because doing so undermines social confidence in the legal system as capable of safeguarding rights.

While procedural safeguards to limit or dispose of frivolous claims at the outset could address this problem in part, no procedural solution can really solve it, unless there is a change in the outlook of both lawyer and client. Adjustment can only be made through a change in the dominant paradigm.

In his recent book, *The Lost Lawyer*, Anthony Kronman, dean of Yale Law School, describes three different types of roles the lawyer plays with regard to a client—the initial assessment and investigation of the case, a counseling role, in helping the client plan for his or her future, and an advocacy role. The counseling role, which I'd like to focus on for purposes of this discussion, is far more than a technocratic task. The lawyer must not only explain the law to a client, identify for the client the legal consequences of pursuing her goals, but must also point out inherent conflicts or tensions between the objective the client is articulating and the client's other ends. Yet, the lawyer could ethically go further. The lawyer could counsel the client with regard to how the client's goals and the means the client is choosing to actualize them, affect the public good, whether that public be the client's own immediate circle or a larger social context.

For example, if the client was considering undertaking a custody battle, the lawyer would raise with the client, as part of legal counseling, the question of how this battle would affect the children, the children's other parent, and the parent's attempts to inculcate the value of mutual respect. If the lawyer is counseling an employer, exploring whether she has considered the cost to her worker of laying him off—even if it is not technically age discrimination to do so—the effect on the morale of other workers, the message you are sending them about their value, and in turn the long-term effect of employee demoralization on building a viable business.

Even after litigation has begun, the lawyer should continue counseling his client about the question of the public good. The lawyer should raise the question of whether there are limits to the pain one should inflict on an opposing party, if doing so would even in some small way help to achieve one's litigation goal. The question becomes more difficult where the failure to pursue these courses could determine the outcome of the case. Yet, that fact should not inhibit the counseling lawyer from raising these hard issues with the client, and even from counseling the client to take an ethical rather than a self-interested position. Legal counseling does not have to be value-neutral; litigation can lead to scenarios that negate the humanity of the persons involved.

It is often said that ours is a litigious society; and I suspect that materialism or the satisfaction of emotional needs through litigation cannot be the sole explanation. It certainly can't be because the legal system is so capable of delivering justice to the many who sue. In *Soul of the Lawyer*, Benjamin Sells argues that people sue more now because there is a rise in "an intolerance that transforms alternative views into opposing ones." He explains this in terms of a deficiency in our ability and in our willingness to look clearly at what the other is thinking or feeling. While we as lawyers

seek to empower our clients, it is hard to do so when our clients are ceding control over their lives to the courts. I often consider legal success stories those cases where I succeed in dissuading a client from undertaking potentially harmful litigation (although this is not to say litigation should always be avoided; I am not "anti-litigation.") In some cases, undertaking litigation is courageous, and necessary to reclaiming one's sense of personal dignity, or in safeguarding one's economic, social, or civil rights, and we lawyers should be proud of our expertise in our craft and our ability to help our clients do that. Litigation should be undertaken for reasons related to these goals, and conducted in that way.

While lawyers can counsel clients, we cannot be successful in our efforts to have clients consider the public good unless our clients have some vision of community building, which is why it is difficult to talk about changing the legal system outside of a larger politics-of-meaning discourse. In turn, lawyers will not counsel their clients in these ways unless we ourselves have adopted such a vision. The starting point for such a vision is for the lawyer as an individual to have compassion for herself, or, as Anthony Kronman described it, "have compassion for the lost causes of her soul, together with a clear-eyed acceptance of their loss, its magnitude and its permanence."

In law school we are taught to look at all positions with an objective eye, so that we begin to see the justice in positions we rejected earlier as unfair. This sense of being able to look at things from all sides, while giving future lawyers analytic strength, can also lead to cynicism. Having lawyers focus on developing their ability to see problems not just from a partisan point of view, and not just instrumentally (so the lawyer could better predict for a client what the outcome of a lawsuit might be, that is, how a judge would be likely to decide it), but from the point of view of the good of the community, as a judge ideally would, could begin to counter cynicism. Such an approach could also serve to address the alienation lawyers feel from our colleagues, as it brings a larger social vision into an individually based legal practice.

Lawyers may play multiple roles in their clients' cases and should be prepared to accept and cope with the complexity of doing that. I may be empowering my client by encouraging her to make decisions that give her life some coherence and integrity, to make choices that move her forward on important projects. For example, in a custody case I might say to my client, "It looks like you're not going to be able to obtain full custody of your child, although I know how important that is to you and what a terrible sense of loss you must feel. But you want to settle this case now so you can maximize what I perceive is most important to you, which is your relationship with your child, rather than the fighting." This approach, acknowledging the complexity and depth of human desire and motivation, does most justice to our clients' humanity, and to our own.

For the lawyer to best effectuate her clients' goals, she must be able to help the client envision different types of communities where these goals might be achieved. This is more than trying to see if a case can be settled, it means looking at how to build contexts which in the long term lead to a functioning connection between parties who will remain interwoven in the future. For example, even in the midst of a custody battle, one might counsel one's client to consider assuming the risk of continuing regular interaction with the opposing party concerning the child's needs, so that there remains in place some context of understanding which could ultimately repair that relationship.

It is hard to view one's adversary empathically when involved in a legal battle; yet if one loses the ability to do so, both lawyer and client not only limit the chance to develop opportunities to resolve the case in a favorable way, but impair their own humanity. It is precisely in the legal forum, which represents the community, that we are most challenged to retie the bonds even as we submit our conflicts for mandated resolution.

The platform at this conference speaks of bringing empathy and compassion back into legal practice, and I now switch from the question of how lawyers practice law, to whether and how law functions as an instrument of justice in society. This too, has been a subject of great concern, as much of our national community feels disillusioned with the way justice, in both the substantive and procedural sense, is dispensed in our nations' courtrooms.

Some believe it is most important for judges to use legal rules to decide cases, since predictable outcomes are a matter of fairness and social order. Others feel that a focus on the rule of law results in a failure to look at individual experience, at the context in which events occur, and thus with the concrete lives of the persons affected by it and that judges may feel compelled to repress their empathic responses for the sake of consistency.

Yet, it is not clear that deciding cases according to the law prevents lawyers from presenting the stories of their clients, or judges from using empathic understanding to decide those cases. And so the question devolves to both the substantive nature of the justice being dispensed by the laws themselves and the type of empathic intelligence brought to the task by the court.

Examples from the area of family law, which is my area of practice, come to mind. The subject of family law is intimate human relationships—the effort to create meaningful communities based on trust and in-

terdependence, the struggle of parents to maintain relationships with their children and remake their lives as adults anew after divorce, the protection of the vulnerable against abuse and exploitation.

From a politics-of-meaning perspective, I would want our substantive body of family law to support a moral vision of commitment, trust, responsibility, and nurturance, while at the same time providing for the autonomy and justice needs of those involved in separating from committed relationships. This means both economic justice and a justice of dignity. For this to be realized, we must have a political community committed to these goals and able to translate them into a legislative agenda.

But beyond that, we need judges who have the ability to implement these goals. In family law, judges have a tremendous amount of discretion—for example, in applying the legal standard, "best interests of the child."

Thus, we need judges who are capable of understanding the full depth of the competing claims they are faced with, and thus, we need human beings in the judicial role who are capable of experiencing, both affectively and cognitively, the impact of their decision on others.

This does not mean that competing claims should be viewed equally; for empathy is also a matter of substantive justice, and judges must prioritize competing claims. Nevertheless, compassion can be integrated into a judge's view of both the facts and the law.

In a piece on the jurisprudence of compassion in the *New York University Law Review*, one commentator discussed the Supreme Court case of *DeShaney v. Winnebago County*. In this case, four-year-old Joshua was visited by a caseworker nearly twenty times and was continuously seen to be abused, yet the caseworker simply recorded the indicia of abuse in her case record, neither contacting Joshua's mother nor seeking to have him removed. In his dissent to the majority's decision, which found no liability against Winnebago County for Joshua's extensive brain damage, Justice William Brennan recounted the facts in the following manner—empathic, compassionate, righteously indignant at injustice:

> Poor Joshua! Victim of repeated attacks by an irresponsible, bullying, cowardly and intemperate father, and abandoned by respondents who placed him in a dangerous predicament..."

To Justice Brennan, the withholding of aid in a context of dependency could be a substantial deprivation of constitutional rights. Whether or not one agrees with this outcome, his framework of decision combines scholarship and passion.

It is the quality of empathic learning that our society provides to those who ultimately become our judges that in large measure determines the type of justice we receive. And thus we have come full circle. □

SPEECH AT THE ETHICS AWARDS DINNER

Labor's Role in a Meaningful Society

John J. Sweeney

I am honored to be with you at the Summit on Ethics and Meaning. You are helping to advance the values and the vision we share: an America that honors working people, that rewards their work, and that restores their spirit of community and solidarity.

You know, I didn't plan it this way, but my schedule today reminds me that the labor movement and people of faith share common values and common goals. And, of course, quite often we're the same people.

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If I could speak personally, my own commitments are rooted in the social teachings of my Church.

I was taught that, since men and women are created in God's image, their dignity must be respected at work. Working people have the right to a living wage. And, while there will always be some churning in the economy, working people should not be cast aside like disposable parts when the last drop of energy and effort has been wrung out of them. I believe that, as the U.S. Catholic Bishops recently declared: "The economy exists for the human person, not the other way around."

Over the years, I have been struck by how many in the movement have been influenced by the teachings of their own traditions—from the prophets of the Old Testament, to the social gospel of modern Protestantism and the determination of the African-American

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church to help people make "a way out of no way."

I have heard these teachings in the words—and seen them reflected in the work—of such leaders of labor as A. Philip Randolph, Jerry Wurf, and Cesar Chavez, and in the struggles and sacrifices of so many women and men whose names are forgotten but whose deeds live on.

And, whenever I hear the voices of prejudice and privilege claim scriptural sanction for their views, I wonder how they managed to read their Bibles without coming across words like "justice" and "love."

I'm not saying that people who believe, as I do, in the traditional values of work, family, and faith must support the labor movement in everything we do. But I do believe that, for people to live decent lives—with lasting commitments to their families and neighbors—they need some security.

For instance, the plant closings of the 1980s and the



STEBEN M. CUMMINGS

corporate downsizings of the 1990s cut millions loose from their livelihoods. And this did at least as much harm to families and communities as all the violent TV shows and raunchy movies that Hollywood could churn out—even if they ran their studios 'round-the-clock, like steel mills in the boom years.

Wherever I go, I try to say four simple words: "America needs a raise." I'm sure you understand that this slogan sums up a set of concerns that are moral as well as material. If people are going to be able to give their families the time and care they need, if Americans are to reach out across the barriers of class and color and culture to restore our spirit of community—then we are going to have to lift the living standards of working men and women. And the best way to do this is by strengthening and revitalizing the labor movement, so that we can give voice to the needs and the values of working Americans, restore their power and advance their purposes on their jobs, in their communities, and all across this country.

I would like to amplify two of these points—and forgive me for preaching to a congregation that understands and acts upon these principles as well as anyone. First, the crisis in the living standards of ordinary Americans is straining not only our family budgets but our family life. And it is tearing at our social fabric and poisoning our political process. Working men and women have been taking it on the chin for twenty years or more because corporate America decided to compete in the world marketplace by downsizing our jobs, our wages, and our working conditions.

And, second, the best answer to this crisis is to build a stronger, smarter, more effective labor movement. Just as in the past, we can restore a spirit of solidarity among working people of every heritage. Just as in the past, we can be the core of a progressive coalition that will expand the frontiers of social justice.

For people to live decent lives—with lasting commitments to their families and neighbors—they need some security. Yet too often, companies have squeezed every ounce of productivity out of American workers, then thrown them on the scrapheap of unemployment or old age, with reduced pensions and health coverage.

To return to my first point: The fundamental problem in our economy is that corporate America made a fateful decision to compete in the new global marketplace the wrong way—not by American teamwork and American know-how, but by driving down labor costs. Too often, companies have chosen to squeeze the last possible ounce of productivity out of American workers, then throw them on the scrapheap of unemployment or old age, with reduced pensions and health coverage. That is why, from 1978 through 1995, the buying power of workers' hourly earnings fell by 12 percent.

Working Americans tried all kinds of coping mechanisms that put a strain on their family lives and on their children. They sent husbands, wives, and teen-age kids into the labor force. They took second and third jobs. They went deeper into debt. Instead of working to live, it seemed that, more and more of us have been living to work. But, in spite of it all, median family income fell 5 percent between 1989 and 1994. That puts a strain on our social fabric, and so does the increasing inequality in wages and wealth.

While most Americans are hurting, the wealthiest Americans are doing better than ever. Between 1980 and 1995, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 404 percent. That provided huge payoffs for investors—but no wage gains for workers.

Corporate profits have risen 205 percent since 1980. Corporate chief executive officers are raking in 360 percent more—and now they earn 187 times more than the average worker. And that's in spite of the fact that workers' productivity has risen 24 percent since 1979—while their real wages fell.

It seems something is way out of kilter. And now, instead of raising workers' wages, profitable corporations are wiping out workers' jobs. You've seen the stories—and I hope you and your friends and families haven't suffered personally. Mobil Oil announces big layoffs and their stock goes up. Chase Manhattan and Chemical Bank announce a merger that puts 12,000 people out of work and *their* stock goes up. AT&T says they plan to lay off 40,000 men and women and their stock goes up.

President Kennedy used to say, "A rising tide lifts all boats"—and, for a long time, he was right. But, now, does a rising tide sink all ships—except for the luxury yachts?

As long as most people feel their living standards are sinking or stagnant, we will have to stand sentry against the demagogues of division.

As history teaches, in every generation, there are those who tell people in pain to blame the stranger in their midst—the immigrant, the outsider, the member of a racial or religious or ethnic minority. Patrick Buchanan is only the latest in a long line of those who exploit suffering and preach intolerance. And whatever success he has enjoyed, he owes to our failure to build a movement strong enough to lift working people up and bring them together.

That leads to my second point: We've got to build a labor movement with renewed purpose and real power—from the workplaces to the polling places. That is why we are making a commitment of historic proportions to organize working men and women throughout the economy, from textile workers to teachers, from carpenters to clerical workers, and from health care to high tech. That is why we are proud when the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union join together with a commitment to organizing—and when they organize the largest textile company in Virginia and workers in the sweatshops from New York to Los Angeles.

That is why we are proud that, this year, more than a thousand of the young in years and the young in spirit—from rank-and-file union members to recent college graduates—are flocking to the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute. They are learning to take the union message to the offices and factories, hospitals and nursing homes, schools and shopping centers of the new American economy. And thousands more will be participating in Union Summer, supporting campaigns to raise the minimum wage and elect good people to public office in communities all across our country.

And that is why we are proud that a new wave of organizing is already beginning to rise, from asbestos workers in New York City, to poultry workers in the South, low-wage city workers in Baltimore, and janitors and nursing home workers across America.

And that is why we are launching an all-out effort at political education this year. We want to put working people's concerns—jobs and wages, education and health care—at the center of public debate.

We want to help working men and women judge candidates for every office in the land against the standard of where they stand on the issues that matter to their lives and livelihoods.

That is why we are holding town hall meetings in communities across the country where working men and women will tell public officials, the news media, and their fellow citizens about how hard it is to hold on to a decent job, make a decent living, and support your family in this country.

And that is why we are on the airwaves right now with messages explaining why America needs a raise, and the minimum wage must be a living wage. We are fighting for the fundamental principle that there is dignity for all work, and there must be dignity for all workers.

We can't do this by ourselves. We can only do it in partnership with all Americans of good will. Together, we can build an America that holds true to our finest values, the values we honor in our homes and our houses of worship.

We want an America where you can raise a family without having to hold down three jobs to do it. Where you don't have to spend so much time at work that you have no time left to go to church or to a ball game with your kids or grandchildren. Where your lot in life is determined by what you do, and not by the color of your skin or the accident of your birth. Where our children and grandchildren can look forward to pay raises, instead of layoff notices. To go to college, instead of a dead-end job. To enjoy life more, not less, than we've been able to. We can make it happen, if we organize, energize, and mobilize our movement—starting right now, today.

It is time for each of us to ask ourselves, as Rabbi Hillel did more than two thousand years ago: "If I am not for myself, who will be? But, if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when? And, if not me, who?" That's our commitment and our calling. So let's get to work. □

SPEECH AT THE ETHICS AWARDS DINNER

Putting Children First

Marian Wright Edelman

I thank all of you who have organized and participated in this conference for your efforts to strengthen moral discourse and moral witness in this country. Never has your voice and presence been more needed.

Recently, a young mother walked into a WIC office—Women's, Infants', and Children's Nutritional Program office—seeking help to feed her hungry baby. When an overworked and tired WIC worker saw the baby drinking from a bottle of red liquid, she was about to read the mother the riot act. Just as she was about to scold her, the mother broke down in tears. She had run out of money a week ago, hadn't eaten in three days, and had used her last money to buy baby formula, which had run out the day before. She knew her baby needed to eat, so she had gone to McDonald's and filled the baby's bottles with two free things: Ketchup and water.

Do you think, as our political leaders on both sides of the aisle seem to be thinking these days, in the congressional proposals we've been debating over the last year, and as most of our governors and mayors and county executives too frequently do—do you think that this hungry baby is responsible for America's ills? For our budget deficit, crime problems, and poor education systems? For the structural changes, wage stagnation, and our labor market, the de-industrialization of our cities, and the economic blight in many of our rural areas? Do this baby and desperate mother have any control over the downsizing of giant corporations, the replacement of human workers by technology, or the exportation of jobs abroad and our global economy?

Is this baby—who had a one-in-three chance of being born without timely prenatal care in the world's leader in health technology, and a one-in-four chance of being born poor in the richest nation in history—the cause or the victim of the widening income gap between rich and poor, which allows 23,000 poor families with children to live on less income in 1993 than one entertainment industry executive? Did this baby manufacture or sell the more than 222 million guns circulating in our nation today, that kill an American child like her every hour and a half?

I find it unbelievable that the morally unthinkable killing of children has not only become routine, but is increasing in our democracy. We're number one in the world as a military power. Are we saying that we are helpless to keep our children safe from the gun violence that kills them every hour and a half in our nation? Gun deaths among our children almost doubled over the last decade; among Blacks and Black teenagers, the increase was 294 percent. I think we can do better.

Did this baby contribute to the pervasive breakdown of moral, family, and communal values in our too selfish and secular culture? And is this baby responsible for her mother's and father's behavior or poverty, or ours?

This baby didn't vote for Democrats, Republicans, independents, liberals, or conservatives, cannot make campaign contributions, lobby, or hold press conferences to make her needs known. That's why we are so pleased that more than 1,700 organizations have endorsed Stand for Children Day. We're going to come, and we're going to stand for this baby, and we're going to represent her future.

This baby, like my child and yours, and the grandchildren I hope to have and that some of you are lucky enough already to have, is a sacred gift of a loving God, and a citizen of the wealthiest nation in the world. Denying her food, preventive health care, the chance to get ready for and learn in school, access to safe child care if her parents work outside the home, education to prepare her for the next century, and jobs after that education, and safety from violence is immoral and lacks both common sense and budget sense.

Blaming and punishing this baby—as our political leaders, in our names, have been trying to do over the last year—for our personal or collective discontents, for our shortcomings and the unfairness of our economy, for short-term political or economic gain contravenes the Old and New Testaments, the American covenant that we honor so well in words but so poorly in deeds.

We're a nation that professes to honor our Judeo-Christian tradition. If I can be forgiven by the rabbis for paraphrasing the midrash, it has been said that when God was bargaining with the people of Israel about whether He was going to give them the Torah, He demanded adequate guarantors. The people of Israel ini-

Marian Wright Edelman is the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund.

tially offered God their elders, but God held them to be insufficient guarantors. They then offered God their prophets, but God said no, that that wouldn't do either. And it was only when their children were offered as guarantors, with the promise that they would be taught God's word, that He agreed to share the Torah.

And when Jesus Christ invited little children to come unto him he did not invite only rich or middle-class, white, male children without disabilities from two-parent families, or our own children, to come. He welcomed all children, and so must we.

And so, on June 1, I hope that we will come together across race and class and region and faith and age, and stand up for all of our children, in word and deed. We want parents and grandparents and religious and community leaders to come together. Because as tough as times are, and as hard as so many parents are struggling to make ends meet, I think we can all do better. And it's time to hold ourselves to a higher standard, in our homes, communities, private sector, and government at all levels. That's what we're coming together to say.

We may not be able to agree on a lot of things as Americans, but I hope that June 1 will be a watershed moment, when we will say that as Americans we are going to agree that as a nation and as a people, we're not going to do harm to children. And that we're going to invest in what our children need, to get a healthy and a fair and a safe start.

So we are asking all young and middle-income working families who are struggling to make ends meet, despite declining wages and economic insecurity—if you're worried about these things for yourself and your children, please come and stand with us. If you are as troubled as I am by the pollution of our airwaves, air, water, food, and earth, and our children's values, come and stand with us. If you're worrying about whether your children's schools are preparing them for the twenty-first century, whether there's going to be a job afterward, come stand with us. If you're anxious about your children getting sick—I, as a mother, find it unthinkable that if my child got sick I couldn't take him to the doctor, a problem so many millions of families face. It's obscene that our political leaders are not debating how we get health care to every one of the 10 million children who don't have it, but how to take away health care from millions more. If you think that's wrong, then come and stand with us.

And if you are tired of our political leaders talking about family values and about children, while cutting things families need to raise healthy and educated children, then come and stand with us.

If this nation can't stand for its children, it doesn't stand for anything.

Let me end with a prayer, as I always do, to ask God to forgive our rich nation, where small babies die of cold, quite legally. May God forgive our rich nation, where small children suffer from hunger, quite legally. God forgive our rich nation which lets our children be the poorest group of citizens, quite legally. God forgive our rich nation that lets the rich continue to get more at the expense of the poor, quite legally. May God forgive our rich nation, which thinks that security rests in missiles rather than in mothers, and in bombs rather than in babies. May God forgive our rich nation for not giving you sufficient thanks by giving to others their daily bread. God help us never to confuse what is quite legal with what is just and right in your sight. Everything that Hitler did in Nazi Germany was legal, but it was not right.

On June 1, let's come together in a massive moral witness to make sure that our nation does what is just and right for our children. □

PLENARY: THE DEPRIVATION OF MEANING IN AMERICA

Reweaving Community's Fabric

Torie Osborn

It's a great honor to be here tonight. I met Michael Lerner twenty-five years ago this spring at a New Left/anti-Vietnam War conference, and have not seen him since until today. That fact is emblematic of the fragmentation and isolation in this country of social-change movements over the past two decades. It's time for us to work together again, to build one giant "Movement" again, like we had before—but, of course, very different this time around.

Torie Osborn is the former executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

As with many of you, the spirit of the '60s is emblazoned on my soul. For the past nineteen years, after the antiwar movement and New Left died, my passions became engaged, first, in lesbian-feminism, and then in fighting AIDS and building the gay and lesbian movement. Today, I bring greetings from a very busy movement, one that is really moving. The gay and lesbian movement is humming with vibrancy, particularly at the local level. This is truly the "gay '90s." We see everywhere:

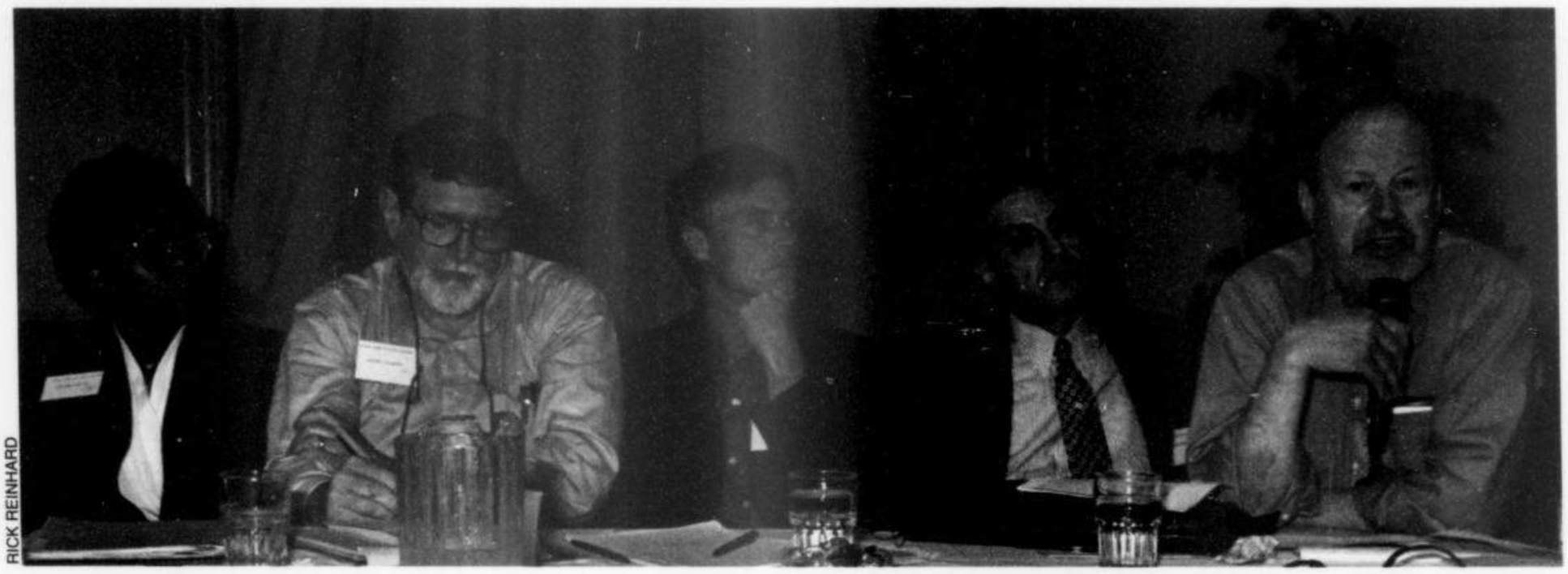
•A mass migration out of closets, all across the country, that has spread way beyond the gay urban ghettos of the past—to rural farmland, in well-manicured suburbs, and inner-city Black churches.

•A burgeoning of organizing and advocacy in every institution in this country—in schools and churches and synagogues, the media, Hollywood, workplaces of all kinds. This is the decade in which the gay issue has come out of the closet for good and onto America's social agenda—even during an era dominated by a Right wing that makes contempt for us core to its ideology.

Yes, the gay and lesbian movement is in motion. But toral and legal gay-rights movement pushes issues or legislative strategies that are important, but doesn't speak the language of the heart that has broken so wide open because of AIDS. And, too often, progressive factions are mired in an alienating "political correctness" that fears power and promotes "victimism." The internal debates that activists get mired in—for example, about assimilationism vs. liberation—are abstract, light years away from where ordinary gays and lesbians live their lives and feel their concerns.

I think, at a grass-roots level, the gay and lesbian community has in fact been *living* the politics of meaning for much of the past decade at least, in a raw and as yet unarticulated way. Further, probably as a natural outgrowth of this, there is a deep hunger to share the lessons of our lives—quietly crafted at society's margins for years—with straight people more openly, to find commonalities with other communities and people struggling to voice new visions for this country's future.

Now, there have been *huge* internal and external barriers to articulating this gay and lesbian version of a "pol-



RICK REINHARD

my movement, like every other that came out of the 1960s, is a movement that today lacks clarity of vision. Identity politics has lost its vitality. What I see is a thriving, busy, passionate gay and lesbian community increasingly interacting with a broader world. But there is an interesting disconnect between the language and reach of the organized "official" political gay and lesbian movement and the daily lives of regular gays and lesbians within the community, whose experiences—in the cross hairs of the rising Right, or coming out in numbers never seen before, or living with the agony of AIDS—have proved to be profound and life-changing, opening their hearts and minds to new ideas.

Too often, the available gay and lesbian political discourse fails them. Academic-based, so-called "queer theory" is arcane and irrelevant. The moderate, elec- itics of meaning": Not only the inherent limitations of the gay version of a liberal "rights" perspective, and the political purism that has nullified too much of the potential of progressive forces within our community. Not only our self-hatred, our "oppression sickness" that has created disturbing and dysfunctional levels of leader-bashing, infighting. Not only a rising Radical Right controlling America's social agenda that puts us constantly on the defensive. Not only the still-rampant ignorance about gay people's lives, with less than 50 percent of Americans reporting that they know someone gay. Not only the challenge of being so diverse—and trying to create a movement that is cross-class, cross-race, multigendered. Not only AIDS, which has decimated our ranks.

But no minority has had more reason to fear and flee from religion than ours—a fact that has been reinforced

daily by the Radical Right's incessant battering of us with the Bible. For obvious reasons, it has *not* been okay to be religious or spiritual until very recently in the gay world, certainly not within the activist world. The Reverend Troy Perry, a former Pentecostal minister who founded the Metropolitical Community Church in 1968—the gay and lesbian church that today has tens of thousands of members—says it was much harder for him to come out of the closet as a Christian in the gay community than as a gay in the straight community.

But a radical change *has* occurred in the past decade, a transformative paradigm shift in the gay and lesbian community's values and our culture. We have moved from a culture of sexual freedom, individualism, self-reliance, and entrepreneurism, all of which are at least in part good things, of course, to a far more coherent community, with a high value placed on service and social responsibility, a collaborative community-building ethic, a partnership model of leadership between men and women, and a surge of spiritual energy. It's been an extraordinary sea-change.

The primary reason has been AIDS, but there are other contributing factors. Coming out of the closet—the first step to freedom for each of us—is about honesty and personal courage and authenticity. With a critical mass of us dealing with it, a shared conversation about those values has emerged. Coming out, in fact, can be seen as a spiritual event—a shamanic journey of soul retrieval, finding that lost, separated part of us ripped away from us by homophobia.

In addition, remember, we are outcasts, the only minority exiled from families of origin. Gay men and lesbians are too often banished from the tribe, or at least raised in families fearful or hostile to our existence. And there is no greater common pain for gay people than the rejection by our straight families. But, in healing that pain, in inventing and building our own unique families, we have learned a lot about what family really is about. Our friendship circles, our extended families, our loving partnerships may not yet have legal recognition, but they represent the best of true family values—caring, mutuality, and love. We have democratized the notion of family from necessity.

Similarly, we have crafted enormous expertise in building community. We have also dealt with diversity. The world lumps us together, but gay women and men, for example, lived on separate planets twenty years ago, and it has been a true miracle of community-building that gay men and women are family and partners in movement-building today.

Then there's been AIDS. Let me share a statistic. In the past fifteen years, 250,000 gay and bisexual men have died of AIDS—largely in concentrated urban areas. Nearly five Vietnam war memorial walls could be filled with the names of gay men who have died of AIDS.

As a result, the gay and lesbian community has had a collective near-death experience that touched everyone, and has transformed our lives and values. The fragile ecology of our families and communities has been repeatedly shaken and traumatized. We are far from the Radical Right's portrayal of us as immoral, sex-obsessed individualists; we have mobilized in extraordinary ways to create a community response to AIDS. In fighting AIDS and dealing with death and dying in our daily lives for a decade and a half, we were forced to heal ourselves, to transcend differences, to fight back together, and to walk through an existential and spiritual crisis.

I have seen, not once or twice, but weekly or sometimes daily, regular people—carpenters and postal workers, and nurses and stockbrokers—become healing warriors, shamans. I've seen the force of radiant love emanating from the eyes and hands and bodies of ordinary gay men and lesbians—dying people or caretakers sitting with the dying. I've seen incredible intimacy undreamed of between strangers in a hospital room; I've seen racism dissolve in a weekend retreat, and drag queens and Birkenstock lesbians leap over chasms of difference to become best friends.

We in the lesbian and gay world are only now beginning to create a viable public language out of these thousands of intense private moments of love and loss and facing God. But it has fired a wide-ranging culture of empathy and compassion, a community ethic of caring that is very moving.

And our anti-religious bias has almost evaporated. The gay and lesbian community is spiritually active, powered by AIDS. Gay temples and churches are booming. Our conferences, our social club meetings, our activist agendas incorporate "calling out" the names of our dead brothers and sisters. We all speak to angels or the spirits of the dead on a regular basis. There is a vivid and animating presence of Higher Powers defined in myriad ways in our daily lives.

So what does all this mean to this gathering of mostly non-gay people, trying to launch a new movement that can help heal America's hurting heart? It means that gays and lesbians are a natural constituency for the politics of meaning message—*and* that we have a lot to teach—that can lend vibrancy to this new movement. We are not another minority that must be added to some laundry-list litany for political correctness; we are a group of people who have learned to heal ourselves and each other and reweave the fabric of what's possible—of what family really means, of how community is built, and how, in the face of hatred, love and hope can win against impossible odds.

Throughout history, across cultures, gay people have been healers and teachers and shamans and artists and poets and visionaries. We are still heavily overrepresented in hospitals and schools—if you took gay people out of those institutions as the Right wants to do, they would simply crumble.

As gay people come out of our closets, and bring the lessons of our lives to America—to every community, for we are everywhere—we bring our particular gifts, and as some of us develop a politics of meaning in these soul-trying times, I submit that those gifts, forged from the raw, rich texture of our lives these past two decades will play an important role.

Finally, there is no politics of meaning that will resonate with people unless it is filled with joy. And—if you'll indulge me in a moment of gay chauvinism—if there *is* a gay gene, then, as lesbian leader Joan Lester has said, it's the gene for *fun*—and we fully intend to bring with us our zest and our campiness and our ability to play anywhere at any time as we help build this new movement. □

PLENARY: THE DEPRIVATION OF MEANING IN AMERICA

Four Principles Toward a Politics of Meaning

Cherie R. Brown

Jewish tradition teaches that Jews had to wander in the desert for forty years until they were ready as a people to move from enslavement to freedom. It will be *that* challenging for people to move from living a politics of materialism to living a politics of meaning. We need to put *at least* as much attention on *preparing* people for this transformation as we do on developing the vision of a politics of meaning.

I would like to offer four principles to guide this essential period of preparation.

Principle 1: We must break the addictive habit of seeking comfort.

I do not just mean material comfort. We are all caught in the habit of seeking emotional comfort, and even identity and religious-based comfort. Seeking comfort as our primary life goal will keep us living small lives. I saw this principle at work this past year when I attended the United Nation's Women's Conference in China. Here we were, the largest, most powerful delegation of women assembled in the history of the world. I attended groundbreaking sessions in which Muslim fundamentalists were in dialogue with Muslim feminists; I witnessed Asian, Jewish, and Black women from four continents who reached past all the barriers of language and culture to get closer to each other. Yet, my Western sisters struggled, because we did not have flush toilets. We slept in hotel rooms with dusty cement floors. We found it difficult to get from one session to another. Here we were with *the* major women leaders from around the world, and every day I listened to Western women complain about the food, the beds, and the transportation. Perhaps we all need to spend some time in Africa and Asia, so we can understand how much we have *all* succumbed to the seeking of comfort as the guiding principle in our lives. Seeking comfort cannot guide us, or we will end up with a small, Western vision for the politics of meaning.

Principle 2: We must have a deliberate, systematic process for emotional healing.

We cannot sustain a politics of meaning unless we can create enough opportunities for us to un-numb, grieve, and let our hearts break about the absence of meaning in our lives. Consciousness-raising groups are not enough. Merely talking is not emotional healing work.

After the second bomb exploded during the series of attacks on buses in Israel in the spring, I spent the week calling friends and colleagues in Israel. I called to offer myself as a friend outside of Israel who could offer healing time to people who needed to cry for hours and face the enormous terror and discouragement. I listened to one particular friend, Sara. For the past two years, she had been leading some of the most courageous work, meeting weekly with right-wing Jewish settlers in the West Bank, giving them a place to be listened to and to heal their fears. When the second bomb exploded, her eight- and ten-year-old boys came to her after watching hours of horrible news reports on TV. They said, "Mommy, we won't ever talk to an Arab again." It took ten hours over a period of a week, letting Sara sob about what was happening with her boys, before she could

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even consider continuing to take leadership to back the peace process. Sara did not need to talk out her concerns. She did not need to strategize about what to do next. She needed a friend who was willing to be with her while her heart broke.

We cannot underestimate how our lives have been *ruined* by not being able to live lives of meaning. We are going to need hundreds of hours to grieve the loss. Otherwise, we will not be capable of sustaining a new vision. We might be able to begin, but we will not be able to sustain our efforts without healing the wounds of the past. Why must we face so much of this past grief? Because when we are not willing to face the grief from the past, we are too susceptible to returning to the errors of the past.

Principle 3: We must reclaim courage.

We cannot build a politics of meaning with people who are acting on their fears. I was in South Africa the week the South African government released Nelson Mandela from prison. I was there to lead a session at a groundbreaking conference on building the New South Africa. Members of the African National Congress, the security police, and youth leaders from Black townships were in attendance. Twenty minutes before the session, a bomb exploded in a hotel a block away from the conference site. I was terrified. I knew I was facing a daunting task, and I didn't know if I was up to the challenge. I somehow found the courage to walk into that hostile room.

I will never forget the South African leader who said to me that week, "Cherie, we don't need skills in prejudice reduction, conflict resolution, or coalition building. What we need is to learn how to reclaim courage." Inspired by the courage I witnessed in South Africa, I returned home and launched a new program in my own organization. For the past five years, every leadership session in NCBI has incorporated a healing session on reclaiming courage and breaking through the barriers from the past that keep us from being courageous. We will not be able to build a politics of meaning unless we identify and then heal the fears that prevent us from acting boldly, no matter how scared we are.

Principle 4: We must end the mistreatment of leaders.

Ending the mistreatment of leaders is a prerequisite for building a politics of meaning. In the current political climate, leaders are fair game, ready targets for attacks. If we don't learn how to support the many leaders who will emerge as part of a politics of meaning movement, our efforts will not succeed. Several years ago, when I was leading Catholic-Protestant reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, I met with the two women who had initiated Northern Ireland's Women's Peace Movement. They had been so badly attacked and emotionally destroyed—mostly by women from within their own movement—that they were unable to continue leading. The Women's Peace Movement died. I am convinced that, had they received the support they needed from other women, we would not have had to wait so long for hopeful signs of peace in Northern Ireland.

Learning from the experience of my Northern Irish sisters, I came home and incorporated into every training program in my organization a session where leaders learned specific skills on how to cherish other leaders, how to build support for themselves as leaders, and how to recognize and interrupt leadership attacks. One of the principles I've come to understand through our work on leadership oppression is that, under the guise of offering constructive criticism, we too often are simply rehearsing our own powerlessness. It is a cheap shot to attack someone else's efforts rather than doing the hard work of taking initiative and modeling an alternative program.

Michael Lerner, for example, has been a leader who takes enormous risks. He is willing to put himself out there with challenging and controversial ideas. Because his ideas are that visible, he routinely gets attacked. I've witnessed this cycle over the years, and I made a personal decision that I would never allow anyone in my presence to attack Michael. We must all make the same firm commitment to back each other's leadership fully—to give each other room to experiment and to try new things out, even when we don't completely agree with each others' programs. We must adopt a correct attitude toward leaders—that leaders are to be cherished, even though they're not perfect. We need a thousand new leaders, not a thousand criticisms of any one leader. Ending leadership oppression has to be a central component of building a politics of meaning. □

MICHAEL LERNER'S NOTE:

Attacks, No! But Criticism, Yes! The difference? Time, place, and manner. In this journal, robust criticism is always welcome. But in a social movement, Brown's point is a welcome corrective to the anti-leadership tendencies that too often flourish.

Shabbat in New York...

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PANEL DISCUSSION

God Does Not Belong to the Right

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling:

Turn to your neighbor, please, and introduce yourselves and say something about yourselves. Then, taking turns, one of you will offer a brief prayer (on whatever issues you wish to address), and your partner will say "Amen," or in whatever way affirm your prayer, and then switch and the other person will do a prayer. So please, everyone, let us pray. [Five minutes elapse.]

Will anyone share their prayers?

Participant I: Thank God for this gathering and may God give us the courage to finish what we've started at this Summit.

All: Amen.

Participant II: Thank God for the miracles that we have, and I pray that we will treat each other with love and respect.

All: Amen

Imad-ad-dean Ahmad:

The most important issue facing the Islamic world today is the status of women. More women than men convert to Islam today, and part of the reason that they are attracted to a more traditional role for women is that, in their experience, they feel that mainstream feminism in American society requires that they give up their femininity and take on male roles and responsibilities that they do not want. They perceive that in order to get rights in American society they have to give up a particularly female identity, whereas in Islam they can retain that identity and nevertheless have necessary rights.

Many Westerners see Islam as repressing women because of the way that Islamic women cover their bodies and face, whereas many Islamic women feel more, not less, liberated when they are not subject to the demands of exposing their bodies to the male gaze. Westerners often blame the existing hierarchical, patriarchal institutions and practices in Islamic societies on Islam, instead of realizing that patriarchy existed long before Islam entered the scene.

An Islamic feminist movement exists today, rooted in the reality of Islamic law. Islamic law offers mechanisms for women to demand their rights, and many women are beginning to do that, although that is difficult in the face of a societal hierarchy and patriarchy. Islamic laws prohibit poverty and exploitation.

Sister Joan Chittister:

What are the obstacles to real spirituality today?

The first obstacle is the civil religion that identifies God's will and the American dream. It is anti-gospel in a suffering world and it is the basis of colonialism and anti-immigrant sentiment. We think we have solved all the problems, have found the true solution, and therefore have a right to export or even impose it on the rest of the world. When you identify your religion with your nationalism, you put your law above God's law, personal anger for God's anger.

The second obstacle is the institutionalism in the religious world. For example, we think that if we have a religious education program that we then have religious education. Often it is the institutions and their formal programs that protect us *from* the gospel and the Scriptures. If, for example, you look at some of the texts being used in our religious schools, you will find values that are very far from the values being articulated at the Summit.

The third obstacle is the identification of symbolism with religion, or that various formal practices are sufficient substitution for encountering and living the will of the God of the Bible. This is how people can go to church, and go to church, and go to church, and then make no real connection between the values that they hear in church and the way they live their lives.

Finally, privatism is a termite in the soul of the seeker. Privatism leads to an overemphasis on personal rather than social sin. But that is only half the gospel in a suffering world. We cannot identify spirituality with privatism.

For the liberal mind, we sometimes find a religious

Mordechai Liebling is executive director of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation. Imad-ad-dean Ahmad is president of the Minaret of Freedom Institute and the Islamic American Zakat Foundation. Joan Chittister, OSB, is executive director of Benetvision: A Resource Center for Contemporary Spirituality. Harvey Cox is professor of divinity at Harvard University. Rebecca Parker is president of Starr King School for the Ministry at the Graduate Theological Union. Eric Yoffie is president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

neutrality that is embarrassed to bring spiritual values into the political arena. The liberal mind sometimes takes the stance of allowing anything for anybody because we want everybody to be free. We end up being free to be valueless.

Harvey Cox:

I've discovered that the religious Right has a lot of internal conflict. Last Fall, Pope John Paul II came to New York and held a mass in Central Park. Sitting next to the Pope on the stage was Pat Robertson. The sermon the Pope gave had three points:

1. It would be untrue to American's history of hospitality and generosity to slam the door on immigrants.

2. It would be a mistake and tragedy for the United States to back out of its international commitments, especially to the U.N.

3. It would be wrong and sinful to dismantle the welfare network that keeps many Americans alive.

This is the opposite of what Robertson stands for. So how could a guy who holds those stands continue to smile as the Pope gave his speech repudiating each part of the Robertson program? He smiles, because he would like us to think that there is a solid phalanx called "the religious Right."

We invited the leader of the Christian Coalition in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to attend a seminar that I teach at Harvard Divinity School, and when he got there some of the religious conservatives in the class asked him to explain what the Contract with American Families had to do with the Gospel. He couldn't, and said, "Look, this is a political document connected with a political movement."

If you look at the document, it's a paltry theological statement (of course, I don't say that in a dismissive way [laughter]). But I want you to look at it because we have to engage these people in theological terms. I am not one of those who says, "Keep these people out of public discourse and shut them up because they are religious." I say, "Welcome them in, give them a place at the table, and be ready to respond from the religious texts." I think you'll find that they are misusing and twisting the texts from which they are claiming to rely on.

I have, however, found in this seminar in which we have been inviting people from the religious Right, that some people on the religious Right are raising important issues. Let me raise two issues that come out of those discussions that are important:

First, how much moral consensus really is needed in order for democracy to function? Can you have a democracy without any basic context of moral consensus? I don't think so.

Second, does religious pluralism necessarily lead to moral relativism? My answer is no, but the flirtation with moral relativism has been a danger in the liberal and progressive world.

I recently spoke with an admissions officer at Harvard and she told me that applicants today are much more likely to express in religious terms their vision of what they want in education and what they want for their lives than previous generations of applicants. These young people are looking for something spiritual. Many of them sign up for a course that I teach at Harvard College, which has become one of the largest enrolled courses at Harvard. We study the Prophets and the moral teachings of Jesus, and afterward they tell me that they are moved by the moral values, but, they tell me, "What can you do, given the way the world is organized?"

These are not powerless kids from the inner city, these are people who are going to be the professional, business, legal, and cultural leaders of the country, yet they already feel powerless, already feel trapped in "the way it is done." The major problem is not that they aren't spiritual and not that they don't care about the common good, but that they already feel trapped!

These young people need the kind of movement that I hope will grow out of the politics of meaning, a supportive context which shows people that it doesn't have to be the way it is, that things can be different.

Mordechai Liebling:

There is no great victory of the Right in America today. Even the 1994 elections did not show a right-wing majority, and had 1 percent of voters shifted their votes, we would have seen a Democratic majority.

Similarly, though there is much public attention to the growth of contemporary Orthodoxy, it is liberal Judaism that is growing in numbers in the last ten years and not Orthodox Judaism. There is a spiritual seeking in this country. Unfortunately, this seeking often takes a personalistic form that seems to be based on the assumption that if I get in touch with my higher self the whole world will be better. We need to bring those people back into a spirituality that is connected to society, and to talk to the spiritual hunger in America by talking a spiritual language and linking that to responsibility to society. The Right has so much influence because it is organized, and works school district by school district. That is where we belong.

Too many of us are caught in despair that can only be countered by talking to people around us. We need to do community organizing with a spiritual basis.

When doing this, we need a spiritual pluralism—and this does not mean moral relativism or that we are boundary-less. Americans want boundaries, because

they correctly feel that parts of their world are out of control. The religious Right has been successful because it posits false boundaries. There is no contradiction between complex values and strong boundaries and still being pluralistic and mutually respectful.

We can't be about sound bites. The Right can, because it seeks to tear down what has been built. But we have a more sophisticated view, and we refuse to claim a monopoly on the truth, and that makes our job harder.

We have to humanize the political process. We need to check in with each other. The politics of meaning is based on empathy and love—and that means it's about relationship-building. If we are going to have a shared theology, it is just this—that each of us is made in the image of God, yet caught up in this larger institutionalization that prevents us from being human with each other.

We are part of a long historical evolution of society. It's too easy, but ultimately misleading, to get caught up in winning the next election or winning the next ballot measure. We are engaged in the central drama of human life: moving God's consciousness forward, moving the spirit into human life. All of the records of our various religious traditions are the records of the effort of human beings to bring spirit into action. We are part of that effort. As we do, it is critical to learn to treat human beings decently, because we are going for the long-term win and not the short-term win.

Rebecca Parker:
What are the religious virtues and spiritual capacities that our world needs?

We need to cultivate and practice a capacity for prophetic witness—the ability to see and say what is happening and to act in accordance with what we know. For example, we know that we cannot live without each other and without the earth. And yet, as a culture, we fail to act in accordance with this knowledge. We need to transform our culture so that our actions honor this knowledge.

The second capacity we need is the religious capacity to endure the shamanistic journey—the journey to the depths of grief and loss through the places of shame and through the process of disillusionment and breakdown, to the places where we regain knowledge, rekindle desire and feeling, find our courage and give birth to vision. I believe we need participation in communal worship experiences, so that we begin to feel in our bones what the process of conversion and transformation is.

Our culture must be capable of making the passage to face fully the reality of the breakdown around us. And we need to let go of patterns through which we have moved thoughtlessly—and we need a conversion of the nation. Religious leadership will come from communities and individuals who have passed through this experience—those within the context of our collective life who have faced oppression and rekindled courage, passion, and wisdom. Those who have passed through these kinds of experiences are those who are identified by the religious Right as the most dangerous—lesbians, gays, bisexuals, Native Americans, Jews, women and men of color.

Finally, we need the religious capacity to make and keep vows about time and money. The dominant religion that is winning in our lives is the economy—it is the ruling theology in our culture and on our globe. The economy defines what it is to be human and what it is to be fulfilled, and tells us that we are competitive, self-interested individuals. We know that this is an inadequate definition of who we are. But it is the ruling theology of our society and has become a danger to the planet itself. We need a spiritual/religious dissent from this collective state religion.

To dissent from the established religion we need spiritual practices.

Two vows that we need to make and keep:

1. The first is to keep the Sabbath: One day a week, do not go shopping, do not go to work, do not do work at home, do not do the dishes, do not do the laundry. Rest. In the morning we went to church, and sang songs of praise for the goodness of life, we prayed for all people in the world that there would be food, comfort. We studied, and we uncovered the news. Then we went home and had the best food of the week, gathered with family, friends, strangers. We played, we went for walks in the woods, and in the evenings we went back to church for discussion of politics and ethics. This practice makes it possible to stay in touch with discussions about the meaning of life. This is a practice of resistance to the dominant religious system.

2. The second is tithing. To tithe is to connect 10 percent of your resources to the common good. Tithing tells the truth about who I am—it tells the truth that I am a person who has been given the resources through a providential life; it restores to us the awareness that we are not poor, not victims, but stewards of a resourceful planet. The lie of our culture is that we are in economic trouble. We are 6 percent of the world's population with 40 percent of the world's wealth. To tithe is to restore our knowledge and receptivity to a world in which all can eat if all of us knew ourselves as those who have already received what we need. We have to stop thinking of ourselves as people without and thinking of ourselves as people who are rich.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie:
How many people in this room can name two members

of their local school board? I see about one third of the people here raising their hands. Well, if the religious Right takes over local school boards, let's not have moaning or complaints about an insidious plot—it is really democracy in action.

The religious Right understands that America is the most religious of the world's democracies. Far more people go to church or synagogue in America than go to football games. It knows that pleas for civic action have always been laced with theological insights. It knows that the greatest protest movements in American history—abolition, disarmament, civil rights—have all been religiously motivated and led. Why was Martin Luther King, Jr. such a towering voice? Because he was religiously powerful and authentic. White Christians had to listen to King because he was speaking their language.

But today, liberals by and large have abandoned religious rhetoric. Perhaps because we have misunderstood the principle of church/state separation and assumed that it meant that the way people worship should not have any influence on their politics.

This is absurd. As a religious Jew, I believe that Judaism's ethics should inform my everyday actions and beliefs. Fundamentalists cite biblical proof-texts to justify their positions, and they frequently seem to get it wrong. Liberals can't seem to remember any proof-texts at all.

Judaism imposes on me two obligations: First, to demand justice in the United States and throughout the world, and second, to insist on personal morality for myself and others. Liberals have not understood either of these obligations. With regard to social justice, we liberals have been insufficiently radical, our moral outrage is consistently feeble; spiritual imperatives get collapsed into tactical ethics. The Hebrew Bible is a radical book, and you don't have to look in the Prophets to see that. The concept of the Jubilee Year: Land that is acquired in an absolutely legitimate way has to be returned to its original owners. Why? Because the biblical authors understood that to create a landless proletariat is contrary to God's will and undermines the foundation of society.

But today we seem unable to sustain a state of spiritual indignation, or to do what the Prophets teach: Treat every injustice as an emergency. And in personal morality, we have abandoned this area, leaving it to be exploited by the conservatives. Who would deny that we live in an atmosphere of ever-weakening moral constraints? Nearly 300,000 students carry guns to school every day. One million teenaged girls get pregnant every year—girls who are too young to see X-rated movies are having their second and third babies. Americans are worried about violence, about drugs, and neither the government nor the people have put up a valiant fight, and liberals are too often silent about these issues. People want to know what we have to say about them.

As liberals, we understand that societal conditions contribute to them, and we demand societal changes that will ease the lot of the poor and the helpless. But religious liberals must also understand that even poverty and despair do not justify hatred and excuse crime. No one is entitled to use suffering as if it gives you an exemption from moral responsibility to the rest of humanity. We must demand both social justice and personal morality and personal responsibility for all.

For example, take obscenity and pornography. I'm absolutely opposed to any kind of governmental restrictions. But as a religious person, I have an obligation to speak out. Pornography debases the sexual act, it detaches it from love and commitment, and puts it on sale as a commodity. It is an affront to my religious values when people see sex in that way. There is no reason why liberals can't speak that language in response to real human concerns.

We must do this because we should be the prophetic voice that appeals to our hopes and not our fears; we must do this because we are partners of God, defenders of the innocent, capable of awesome and majestic deeds; we must do this because decent Americans can do no more, and compassionate religious leaders can do no less. □

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Illustration by Tadeusz Popiel; taken from the book.

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PLENARY: WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY NURTURES THE SOUL?

Nurturing the Soul

Jyl Lynn Felman

I am a Jewish lesbian vegetarian chicken writer; attorney at law, performance artist, silky smooth dancer, high femme, soft butch, adjunct gender-bender Brandeis professor, racquetball player, *vilde chaye* wild beast, grilled salmon lover, portobello mushroom gorger; loving friend, would-be rabbi, cultural worker, post modern Zionist, deconstruction activist, five-mile-a-day jogger, U Conn women's basketball *aficionado*, French food connoisseur; Scrabble fanatic, budding Rollerblader; hot bath soaker, snorkeler supreme, and coalition-builder between Blacks and whites; Jews and Gentiles; gays and straights; men and women; nuclear families and non.

I am unsolidly middle class, upwardly mobile, highly educated, politically astute, and intellectually gifted. And I have been severely depressed, hospitalized, aspirin overdosed, stomach excruciatingly pumped and therapized since my Bat Mitzvah in Dayton, Ohio, thirty years ago. As an adult, I have had months of immobility; not being able to get out of bed, unplugging my phone, crying for days without end, not eating, overeating, despising myself, not talking to another human being for weeks; been so utterly alone and profoundly isolated that I do not know how I am alive today. I have kept the severity of my depression hidden from everyone I know until twelve weeks ago, when I reached zero. Completely depleted, I collapsed.

Only I didn't recognize the collapse as any different from the way my entire life had gone. I assumed my heart was aching once again in its forever inconsolable way. For as long as I can remember, I have been haunted by grief and a soul that has cried out. Real, genuine healing has always eluded me; temporarily within reach but ultimately, permanently out of my firm grasp. The quiet spirit that I crave within a peaceful self has been hopelessly unattainable.

In the winter of 1996, once again, I lost my faith. With much regret, I acquiesced. This was the way things were. I had to accept the fact that I was just another funny, Midwestern Jew with a very short haircut and a depressed melancholic spirit who could not find a cure for her postmodern, endlessly deconstructed cerebral and emotional paralysis. Worse, I had to learn to live with the terror of unproductivity and the nightmare of not ever living up to my own potential.

There was nothing wrong with me. Except that I couldn't stop crying. At the dentist, when I merely opened my mouth; at the check-out counter at Stop & Shop; at every red and green light; and every time I stopped to fill up my car with unleaded gasoline. I was despondent, unable to hold onto the reality of my good life and all that I had accomplished. I had resisted medication before, five years ago. As usual, I had talked my way out of the need for pharmacological intervention, convincing my therapist that time was all I needed. Over the years, I had achieved a quasi-equilibrium. A state of being that included extremely short highs and many long, drawn-out lows, which I thought I could live with. But I was wrong. This time I had no elasticity. So, reluctantly, I gave in. To Prozac.

I am here today because of a little white and green capsule. This is what nurtures me. And the truth of what I wrestle with as I ask myself—and you—what kind of society nurtures the soul, when what that soul requires to live is constant, mood-altering medication that costs, depending on the dosage, $80 to $160 a month. I am forty-two years old and I want my life. All of it. What does it mean that in order to have my life I must now take a pill? I am living in the middle of a huge ethical and moral dilemma that is part of the politics of meaning. I know I am not alone in my search for wellness that is both spiritual and physical; communal and social.

I have come to read my sheer desperation as a symptom of a greater ailment, a societal malaise left untreated for decades, handed down from one despondent family member to another. Until it's actually in the bloodstream and the drinking water. Escalating until the explosive vortex of an emotional earthquake pours hot molten despair over everything. We are in the midst of an inherited, historical crisis that includes the perpetual denial of psychic pain, offering up, instead, sig-

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nificant theories of abuse, dysfunction, deprivation, and abandonment that will contain the sorrow forever. Until yes, perhaps it's true, we are all finally out of serotonin and our biological makeup has been altered over time. But is the only remedy a tiny plastic pill?

The cure is partially medicinal—my body chemistry is completely out of sync. And Prozac helps balance the intense mood swings that have become my shadow, following me from room to room. But the wondrous effect of pharmacology is that the dense fog in my brain has cleared just enough to allow for the emergence of another even starker reality. At the core of my debilitation is an isolation that is both personal and political in nature. I am afraid to ask for help. I am afraid that my need for human intervention is too great and that it will test the generosity of my friends and those who love me deeply.

My shame is enormous. No one could stand to be with me for more than a couple of minutes. More than the outstretched hand of my therapist, I need real, genuine, physical love that embraces a broken spirit. Will you hold me, sit with me long enough to flush out my system, rid it of generations of unacknowledged grief? What I need is dinner. A regular, once-a-week, home-cooked meal.

I am afraid to ask someone to stay with me. Sleep over in the guest room. And no one offers. Everyone is busy: All my friends lead active, productive, important, jam-packed lives. They have their own psychic demons to battle daily. What makes my pain any more real than theirs? They don't need mine. Besides, everybody knows that depression is contagious; like Velcro, it sticks.

But what is an ethic of caring? How do we create meaning if not in caring for the sick? Shaping good social policy is simply not enough. The measure of our commitment to one another will be revealed in our ability to offer food and shelter in the utmost, intimate, personal way—not just to a political cause, but to a loved one, who is temporarily unable to nourish herself.

After I took a pill, my mind began to clear. This single, smooth powder-filled capsule is both miraculous and terrifying. What if I couldn't afford to pay the price of the drug? Yes, I would rather buy a book than a pill. But I feel good, for the first time in weeks. And I can think again, whole complete, complex thoughts. I ask myself how we create the human connection that is necessary for the planet to survive? What does it mean to be truly family?

My blood sisters live in the same city—within ten minutes of each other—and they never speak. My ninety-eight-year-old grandfather and his seventy-three-year-old daughter haven't spoken to each other for years. The last time I saw my father was six months ago. But family values are important. I haven't seen my neighbors for the last eight months. They have no idea that I couldn't get out of bed. Can I trade my fifteen minutes of fame for fifteen minutes of your arms around me while I cry?

Last fall, one neighbor got divorced after twenty-four years of marriage. (Her ex-husband left me a handwritten note taped to the garage door.) I keep wanting to have her over for dinner. She is alone, right next-door, with her two adolescent daughters. I could walk through the yard, if I wanted to. Her aloneness mirrors mine. I have learned to cry on the phone. To sob perfectly into the beige plastic receiver, which I grip as if my life depended on it. The tears rush out quickly before my time runs out. When can we have a cup of mint tea?

This is the g-ddamn problem with the Prozac. It makes me feisty. Or does it just make me, *me*, as my therapist claims. What is the personality of the pill and the personality of me? This is what I am trying to understand. The meaning of the pill I had to take to write this piece, when for months I could not make a single sentence. Am I writing this, or is a ghost? Where do I begin, and the pain and the pill end? Sometimes I think my friends like me better sad; I actually make fewer demands. I feel like handing out white and green capsules to everyone I meet on the street. It's in their eyes: all that accumulated grief. How do we, as human beings, coalesce against the torrents of our fear?

What is an ethic of caring? How do we create meaning if not in caring for the sick? Shaping good social policy is simply not enough. The measure of our commitment to one another will be revealed in our ability to offer food and shelter in the utmost, intimate, personal way—not just to a political cause, but to a loved one, who is temporarily unable to nourish herself.

This is political. How I act, react, or interact with you. Not the theory but the praxis. What is the respon-

sibility of the witness to the pain? Who will sit up with me, next time, in the middle of the night? When I dial the phone after 10 p.m., all I get is an answering machine. After machine after machine. When my mother died, I got three machines in a row. My own machine is always on; yes, I am a screener. Culpability and alienation move back and forth. Often I do not return my phone calls. Or pretend that I am busy. I too have been unavailable. Only I couldn't acknowledge it until now. But I am learning slowly, not to flee so quickly from the cries of the heart. Convenience. Everything is open twenty-four hours but the human spirit. What exactly is the responsibility of the witness to the pain?

These are times of simultaneous truths and coexisting multiple realities. The depletion is collective. While the panic about economic survival grows larger day by day, and global ethnic cleansing is commonplace, the communal need boils over, scalding everyone in sight. So that by the winter of 1996 nothing was preventing me from withdrawing completely into myself except my own sheer force of will. I tried to understand what my responsibility was to care for myself. Only I couldn't understand. Anything. This was my dilemma. In capitalistic terms, the means of production had broken down, ceased to produce, and the worker could not fix the machinery alone. The worker needed help. This is the challenge of narcissism. Yours and mine. To understand fully the implications of our interconnectedness and our interdependence. So that we don't lose a single human being.

It is two in the morning. I am sound asleep, tucked in tight between the covers and the cotton sheets. My lavender dream pillow scents up the entire bed. In my sleep, I reach for the small, square cushion. Suddenly, I wake up to a very loud buzzing that just keeps getting louder and louder. I don't know what's happening. My alarm is going off. Only I don't know if it's my car or the burglar alarm in the house. I am frozen. What if someone is downstairs? I am all alone.

But I have turned off the phone. Even if my neighbors wake up, they will not be able to reach me. As soon as I turn the phone on, the alarm service calls. The technician, whom I do not know, stays on the line and talks to me while I walk through the house to make sure no one has broken in. The motion detector in my study went off. I am afraid to go into the room by myself. Then I remember that I left a window open. If the wind is blowing hard it could set the alarm off. The wind has been blowing all night. A huge gale storm. I am shaking as I put the receiver down.

This has always been my worst fear: to be alone in the house at night and have the alarm go off. The phone rings again. It's my neighbor, the woman whom I want to have over for dinner. She heard the loud buzzing because she was wide awake, reading. A massive gust of wind knocked her mailbox down, and then my alarm went off. She knew I'd be scared. Was I okay? Did I want her to come over and walk through the house with me? *No, I'm fine. Thanks for calling.* I am babbling into the phone, I am shaking so hard.

When I hang up I crawl back into bed and hold myself tightly. I am amazed that she called, that she knew my number at two in the morning. I was not the only one who heard the alarm go off. My neighbor, whom I haven't seen since her divorce last fall, called to make sure I was okay.

The vacuum of this cultural alienation fills slowly. As I fall back to sleep I know that the challenge of the Diaspora is not to wander in exile forever. My responsibility is to resist, to find a place called home that is not merely a single, free-standing residential dwelling. We must move beyond the sympathetic imagination and past the vicarious identification with pain. All the bridges must be open for regular travel back and forth. Between the collective and the personal.

I am a wild beast, a raging, wailing *vilde chaye* who does not want to take Prozac for the rest of her life. The day will come when I can no longer afford the psychic cost of the pill. But the truth is that I am a coalition-builder between the terrifying underworld and all the day travelers. Between the howling night wind and the cool sea breeze; the frigid cold winter and the coming spring equinox. Between the cries of the spirit and the nuclear reactor, CD-ROM, euthanasia, microwaveable, technological age. Between the wonders of science and the scientific experiment. The truth is I am a coalition-builder between what the past has wrought, the present is, and the next millennium. And the truth is always hard to bear. □

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FICTION

The American Sun & Wind Moving Picture Company

Jay Neugeboren

In the forest, high above the lake, I imagined that I was, far below, trapped beneath the black ice. I gathered sticks for kindling, pressed them close to my chest, then brought the bundle, like a gift, to the edge of the woods. I looked down at the lake and saw that Mr. Lesko and his horse were already out on the ice, clouds of steam pouring from the horse's nostrils.



Beside the small fire, my Uncle Max was unwrapping the camera from its blanket—lifting it tenderly, as if it were an infant—then setting it upon the tripod: a sign that we would soon begin. I closed my eyes and prayed that I wasn't too late—that I had not stayed in the forest too long, and that there was still time for me to help make up our new story.

That was what I loved most in the world in those days—making up stories we would turn into moving pictures. I could make a story out of anything—a nail, a glass, a shoe, a tree, a mirror, a button, a window, a room, a face—and for every story I made up and gave away, I also made one up I told no one about: one that I stored inside me, in the rooms where I kept my most precious memories and pictures.

Below me, Mr. Lesko was hitching his horse to the ice plow and, when he urged his horse forward, I climbed into his head and saw that he was hoping the horse would resist him so that he might use his whip. The sleighs—pungs, we called them—were on the land, next to the ice house, and while I was gone Mr. Lesko and his son had cut a runway into the lake's shallow end, for floating the cakes of ice to shore.

I closed my eyes, made a picture of the lake, and labeled the picture as if I were back at our studio, printing out an opening title for one of the moving pictures my family made:

FORT LEE,
NEW JERSEY
NOVEMBER 12, 1915

I opened my eyes and saw that my Uncle Max was fishing inside his suitcase for his lenses and film. My mother was lifting dresses and hats from the clothing bag my father held open for her. My Uncle Karl was talking with Mr. Lesko, showing him where he wanted the ice cut.

I made my way down the hill, and started across the lake to where the fire was burning below the camera. I'd helped build it there an hour or so before—lit the first match to the greasy newspapers so that, the heat rising steadily, the oil in the camera would remain soft, and the gears would not freeze.

I looked down into the black ice—the first ice of winter—veined like marble, clear like glass. In the space between land and snow, I knew, small animals and insects lived all winter long. Was there a space like that between water and ice, where I might lie down, I wondered.

In ancient times, Max had taught me, men would build memory palaces inside their minds, and in each of the palace's rooms they would keep furniture, and on the furniture they would place objects. They invented

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ART BY STEPHANIE SHIELDHOUSE

systems and conjured up images by which they could name the rooms, and recall which rooms contained which objects and how the rooms led to and from one another. Sometimes they did this to remember the objects themselves, and sometimes the objects were there to remind them of other objects, or of lists or texts they wanted to set to heart—of where all the stars in the universe were located, or the words to the Psalms, or the order of their sins, or the names of the saints.

In our own times, Max said, people still organized their memories in similar ways, but now instead of being kings or priests or philosophers living in temples and palaces, they were travelling magicians, or memory artists, or idiot savants working in vaudeville, or at county fairs, or in circuses.

My father's three suitcases, like steps leading to an invisible stage, sat side by side on the ice, next to the sleds on which we transported our equipment, and inside the suitcases were his accordion, his violin, and his clarinet. When Karl wanted actors and actresses to show more feeling, he had my father make music for them. My father played his violin during love scenes. He played his accordion during bar room scenes and cowboy movies. He played his clarinet or his flute or small pump-organ for night scenes, or when people were dying, or forlorn.

I deposited my bundle of sticks next to the fire.

Max tapped the side of the camera. Is this one reel? he asked.

No, I said. It's not real until you open the shutter, turn the handle, and let the light inside.

Stop with the nonsense, Karl said. Two reels, he said.

This one's a two-reeler we gotta finish by the end of the week.

Max smiled at me, and winked.

But if it's *too real*, I asked, how will we be able to bear it?

And we don't need your crappy routines either, you two, Karl snapped. If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you.

Leave the boy alone, my father said. He's a good boy, even if he looks like a girl. He brought wood for the fire, right?

Mr. Lesko's son was on the ice now too, but I could not tell which was the father and which the son. They both wore beaver coats, the fur turned to the inside, and they wore black leather hats with earflaps. One of them walked on the far side of the horse, pushing an ice-marker back and forth along the surface of the lake, making a checkerboard of squares, so they would know where to plow and take out the cakes of ice.

Max's warm breath was on my face. Joey? he asked.

I closed my eyes. I see a woman drowning, I said.

Karl came closer. And—? he asked. Okay. So she's drowning. So what else—?

I see her drowning, I said, and she's caught inside a hole in the ice, trying to climb out, to save herself.

And then—? Karl asked. Come on. And then—?

There's a man, and he has a whip in his hand. I looked up at the hill where I had been a short while before, and I pointed. And there's a frightened child up there, alone in the forest.

Why? Max asked.

Because the woman had to marry the man after she gave birth to the child. But the man beat the child until, one day, when it was old enough, it ran away.

I like it, Karl said. This we can sell—whips, and a mother and child we can weep for, and then a chase.

Whipping and weeping, my father said brightly. We all looked at him. He shrugged. Whoopee, he added, softly.

My mother put her arm around his neck. Shh, she said. Let the boy finish. She looked toward me. What else, sweetheart?

Well, there's another man, I think, and he looks exactly like the man with the whip, except that his eyes are different. This man is the man she truly loves, and he's running through the forest as fast as he can, and—

The horse! Karl said. What about the horse? Come on with the horse before I freeze my nuts off.

But why a horse? Max asked.

Why a horse?! Karl exclaimed. Because we've *got* a horse, you idiots—that's why!

Sure, my father said. Do the best with what you've got and leave the rest to God. That's what I always say.

My philosopher! my mother said, and she whacked my father on the side of his head with her purse. Then she kissed me on my right ear, stood back, laughed, reached inside her coat, pulled out a pistol, and fired it at the sky.

Come on and get me, you dirty varmints! she cried out.

I ran to her and hugged her hard—*I've got you!* I shouted—shoving my hands inside her coat, where the black silk of her dress felt warm against my wrists.

My little baby Joey, she whispered. My angel boy. Don't ever let them hurt you. Promise me, all right? Do you promise me?

I looked up. Her eyes were moist. I promise, I said.

My mother was the most beautiful woman in the world when she got like this—going from hot to cold, from anger to love to sadness and back again. I hugged her with all my might. She held me at a distance. Such a sweet nose, she said. She tugged once on each of my ears, then lifted my cap and roughed my hair. What a waste, what a waste. Maybe your father's right—that you should have been a girl.

My father took me from her, lifted me high in the air. Get a load of those tiny ears, he said. And those gorgeous curls—that slim waist!

What a waste, my mother said, and she laughed. Like I said, right? What a waste—!

Shh, Max said. He's a boy, not a girl. Leave him be.

Hurry! Karl said. We gotta hurry. Look! Karl pointed to the far end of the lake, where, behind the northern range of low, rolling hills, a wide, black wall of clouds rose up, like a mountain. The clouds moved toward us as if the ocean were behind them, pushing them through the sky.

The Leskos pulled chisels from their overcoats, knelt down and started chopping and hammering along the lines they had made with their ice-marker.

Karl slapped at his shoulders and walked in circles around the fire, first one way, and then the other. This is why I'm moving to California, he said. All right? In California we can make movies every day of the year without freezing our tushes off. In California, Edison and his thugs won't burn down our studio and break our cameras. Everyone else is out there already. Griffith's making features he's gonna charge two bucks a seat for—two bucks, for crying out loud!—and I'm still pissing my life away with you idiots on these two-reelers.

Max cupped his palm over my eyes, then took his hand away.

Joey? he asked.

I nodded, kept my eyes shut tight. I see a horse falling through the ice, I said. The woman and the child are holding on to the horse and the two men who look the same are trying to pull them from the ice. And there's blood. I see lots of blood—

It's about time! Karl exclaimed. Now we're getting somewhere.

The blood is turning the water black—

Terrific, Karl said. Love, danger, violence, rescue—we stick to the basics, yes? That's terrific, Joey. Really terrific. He pressed me to his bosom. I knew I could count on you—you're not an idiot like the rest of us. So okay. So one of you geniuses tell me—where do we start?

Inside the ice house, my mother said.

Why the ice house? Karl asked.

So we can get warmed up, my mother said. Why do you think?

My mother started running across the ice, taking long strides, and then gliding, making believe her boots were ice skates. She jumped over the open runway, stopped, put more bullets into the chamber of her pistol, spun the chamber, clicked it closed. She was having one of her wild days, where I loved her most of all because you never knew what she would do next.

She turned toward us and shouted, as if she were leading a cavalry charge: Ready or not, here we come—The American Sun and Wind Moving Picture Company! Hurray! Hurray!

Then she fired her gun into the air, three times, and the explosions blasted through my skull like the sound the lake would make if it were splitting open. I heard a man scream. The Leskos were trying to control their horse, which was rearing above them, hammering the air with its hooves. The screaming came from the hilltop where I had been standing a few minutes before. A man stood there now, his hands clasped above his heart.

Holy mackerel! my mother said. I finally did it.

Max! Karl yelled. Start shooting—we'll figure out the story to go with it later. Hurry, Max. Camera! Camera!

Max did what Karl told him to.

The man on the hill, his hands still pressed to his heart, twirled in a circle, tumbled down the slope, rolling this way and that so that I was afraid his skull would smash up against boulders and tree trunks.

It's Izzie! my father shouted, clapping his hands.

He was right, and I watched Izzie carom off a rock, sail onto the ice and spin around, face down. He lay there for a few seconds, as if dead, and I ran out toward him.

When I was no more than ten feet away, he stood up, grinned, doffed his cap, and bowed.

Hurray for Izzie! I yelled.

Izzie was my mother's cousin, our stunt man when he was sober, and often when he was not, and I loved him as much as I loved Max. He could walk on the ledges of high buildings, and stand up on the wings of flying airplanes, and jump out of burning windows, and ride wild horses. He could duel with swords and drive cars like a maniac and fight with his fists like Battling Levinsky.

How's my favorite little guy? he asked, and before I could answer, he hoisted me into the air and was racing across the ice with me. I stretched my legs and arms way out, as if I were an airplane. We zoomed in for a landing, and he set me down beside the fire and started in, at once, kissing my mother. Izzie loved to kiss my mother as much as he loved to drink gin.

My father grabbed Izzie and began waltzing him around in circles, while he sang the words to "The Beautiful Blue Danube."

Karl was screaming through his megaphone that we were all crazy, that time was money, that we were robbing him blind, that by the time we finished shooting in the ice house and got back out here, we'd have lost our light.

Easy does it, cousin. Easy, Izzie said, his arm around Karl's shoulder. Like I always tell you, the main thing in life is to have a good time and not to get hurt. Everything else is extra.

Not to get hurt? Karl shot back. Ha! Look who's talking! I think maybe what we got here is a major case of the pot calling the kettle black.

I never risk injury, Izzie said, and he repeated words he always gave to people when they told him he took too many chances: Everything I do in this life is figured out exactly.

The Leskos put away their chisels. One of them took a pair of ice tongs from the leather harness on the side of the horse, opened the tongs wide, hooked them into the cake of ice. But even before they lifted out the first cake, I realized that only some of the blood in the lake was coming from where the horse was scraping its neck and legs raw against the sharp edges of ice.

Izzie rubbed his hands together. So what are we waiting for? Let's put this show on the road.

But what if it rains or it snows? my father asked. We have to think about that also. What if there's a storm? What do we do then?

We shoot our moving picture, Karl said, whether it rains, or whether it snows, or whether it storms, or whether it stinks.

My father lifted his accordion, shrugged the straps into place over his shoulders, began playing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean." My mother reached into her purse—the small telescope bag in which she kept her make-up—took out her mirror and her lipstick, passed the gold tube back and forth through the flames, to thaw it, then lifted the lid and twisted the tube of red wax upward. She stacked my father's suitcases to eye level, set her mirror on top, began doing her lips.

Now I saw fountains of blood exploding up from the bottom of the lake. The wind was roaring through the water like thunder, tearing holes in whatever was in its way—rocks, animals, trees, children—and I closed my eyes again, the way I did when I wanted a scene to change, and I saw that below the ice and water and mud, an entire lost world existed—people, rooms, buildings, cities, castles—and that it was from this world that the blood was rising.

Here, sweetheart, my mother said. It's time. She handed me the mirror and the lipstick, so that, for our story, I could begin to turn myself into her daughter.

I looked at my image in the mirror—stared through the dark holes in the middle of my eyes and imagined that on the wall at the back of my skull, my face, like the pictures inside Max's camera, was upside down.

So tell me, Joey, Izzie asked. Would you like to be our director? Yes! I said.

Good! He handed me Karl's megaphone. Taped to the wide end of the funnel was a circle of cardboard, and in the middle of the cardboard my uncle had cut out a rectangle, so his megaphone could double as a viewfinder. I looked through his viewfinder at my mother, squinting until the only thing I could see were her lips. They were moist and wine-red, and someday soon they would fill entire screens—forty feet wide and thirty feet high in some of the new theaters in New York City.

The boy wants to be a director, Izzie said.

Fine with me, Karl said. I had enough already for a lifetime. Take over. He got my blessing.

Good. So here comes everything you need to know, Izzie said. Are you ready?

Ready, I said.

Okay. Then repeat after me—Camera.

Camera!

Action.

Action!

Cut.

Cut!

Wonderful! he said, and he kissed me hard on the mouth. Now you know everything Karl knows. Now you're a director!

The Leskos were floating cakes of ice along the runway, toward shore. I held a strip of black velvet up, next to the camera. When my mother turned and looked at it, her pupils dilated at once and her pale blue eyes went dark.

Cut! Karl said, and Max stopped shooting. My mother looked away. I put the strip of velvet in my pocket, and while Max counted, I back-cranked the camera for him, eight turns. Then he tilted the camera down, its lens pointed at the open water, and he cranked the handle forward, so that before one scene ended the next one would begin. That way my mother's eyes would seem to dissolve in the dark water of the lake. You would see her face, aflame with fear, and then you would see her eyes grow dark with despair, after which Max would make you move inside her eyes, the scene would melt, and you would go right through her eyes until you were staring into water that was as deep and black as the night.

One of the Leskos hooked a cake of ice with a pike pole, dragged the cake onto a plank. When the Leskos had six cakes of ice lined up, they jammed them together, shoved a slab of wood into them at one end—there were two metal spikes in the wood—attached the slab of wood to the horse, by rope, and made the horse pull the blocks of ice along the plank, to shore.

By this time the Leskos had carved out a section of the lake that was as large and square as the diamond of a baseball field. Max raised his camera slowly, set it in position, and photographed the northern crescent of

the lake, where Mr. Lesko was walking behind his horse, plowing the ice. Mr. Lesko played my mother's cruel husband. Mr. Lesko's son played the Gentle Stranger. He wore a ragged brown wool coat Izzie had given him, and he worked without a hat, so that the winter light, playing through his brown curls from behind, made him appear gentle.

I was wearing a wig made of real hair—long auburn tresses—and under my black coat, on top my regular clothes, I now had on a white blouse and a soiled blue pinafore.

Action! Karl shouted across the ice, through his megaphone. Mr. Lesko stopped plowing, took out his whip, raised it above his shoulder.

Camera! Karl shouted.

Max began cranking, and Mr. Lesko started whipping his horse.

No! I screamed. And I shot out from where I stood, streaked across the ice, grabbed at his arm. He threw me off easily.

Cut! Karl shouted.

Wonderful, Joey! he called. That was wonderful! I didn't expect you to do that.

I had not expected to do it either, but I didn't say so.

Izzie took the whip from Mr. Lesko's hand, raised it high in the air, as if he were going to strike him, but instead he pivoted, and lashed out at the horse. The whip cracked, making a sound like a bullet firing, but the lash never touched the horse's flank.

This is your last warning, Izzie said. If you whip the horse again, I'll whip you. Is that clear? And you *never* touch the boy. Do that again, and I kill—

Mr. Lesko said nothing.

He scares me with his anger, my mother said. He never used to be so angry.

He needs a drink, my father said. That's all. He always gets this way when he needs a drink.

I watched Izzie squat down and dip his hand in the water, to test its coldness. I watched Mr. Lesko coil the end of his whip. I watched my father take out a small pair of scissors with which he snipped the fingers from a pair of wool gloves, so he could, the pink tips of his fingers exposed, continue to play his instruments in the cold.

Behind the clouds, the light in the sky was starting to fade, and I imagined sitting with my mother on a ledge of ice, above the open channel, after everyone else was gone. I imagined us slipping quietly over the edge, descending noiselessly through water and passing through the lake's sandy bottom. I had given them one story and now I was making up another, one I could keep inside me forever—about how my mother and I made our way into the lost world below the lake, where we would find out the source of all the howling and pain and blood.

Max photographed Mr. Lesko's eyes, and then he photographed the horse's eyes. Next he photographed Mr. Lesko's son, who, with tongs, was hefting blocks of ice from the plank onto the sleigh. When Mr. Lesko's son looked at his father, his eyes lost their hatred, and became soft, like the eyes of a wounded animal. Brilliant! Karl said, peering through his viewfinder. You're a genius, Joey, to have thought of making the husband and the lover the same man.

Their faces are the same, but their eyes are opposite, Max said.

Yes, Karl said. Max can make miracles with eyes—I gotta hand him that. In life, you see, eyes are just little things in a face, with skin that goes up and down over them, but in moving pictures, the eyes—oh the eyes are everything, let me tell you. I watched Max unscrew the camera and wrap it in the blanket. I helped load the sleds with our equipment, and we walked back across the ice, up onto land, through the snow, to the ice house.

Our story that day was simple, and we made it up as we went along, the way we always did.

My mother was living a harsh and lonely life, married to Mr. Lesko and caring for me, her beloved daughter. In early scenes, which we would shoot back at our studio the next day and then patch in later, you would see the two of us slaving away for Mr. Lesko in his kitchen, submitting day after day to his tyranny. Until the day upon which the Gentle Stranger wandered into our world.

The Gentle Stranger was weak and hungry. He carried a book of poems and in the evenings, when our chores were done, he read to us from Tennyson, Swinburne, and Shelley. Karl liked to put sections of poems into the titles because if the pictures didn't tell people what to feel, he said, the words would.

Max disagreed. He believed our stories should be told in pictures only, so that anyone in the world, in any time and place, could understand them. Because all the stories I made up came to me in a series of pictures that marched across the screen inside my head—pictures that seemed less real the instant I even *tried* to find words to describe them—I agreed with Max.

We think in pictures, Max always said. Not words.

Even though I agreed with him, whenever I found pictures and people in my head I wanted to save, I gave them names, the way I named the Gentle Stranger—and the way I named our scene now—and I invented titles to put on the doors and windows of their rooms, so that someday, if I wanted to, I would be able to find them again.

The Gentle Stranger Finds a New Home
With the Mother and Her Love-Child

In exchange for food and lodging, the Gentle Stranger worked for Mr. Lesko, cutting wood and harvesting ice. Mr. Lesko let him use the ice house for a home, and he slept there each night, between walls of ice and sawdust, and wrapped in old blankets.

Then one night, after Mr. Lesko got drunk and fell asleep, we stole away to the ice house, and my mother told the Gentle Stranger our story: how she had been sent to work for Mr. Lesko as a housekeeper, and how Mr. Lesko had forced himself upon her, after which, in her shame, she had had no choice but to become his wife.

Perhaps it was God's will, my mother said, drawing me close to her. For had I not submitted to Mr. Lesko, my most precious jewel would never have come into being!

That was when the Gentle Stranger declared his love for my mother. He went down on his knees and clasped my mother's hands to his bosom.

I have never loved another as I love you, he said. You have rescued me from the dead! Without you I cannot live.

My mother's face went wild, her true heart showing in her eyes, but she pulled her hands free and turned away.

I am a married woman, she said.

I looked at the Gentle Stranger and I looked at my mother. I took his hand and I took hers—the hand on which she wore her wedding band—and I joined their hands together.

Then we argued.

Karl said that next my mother and The Gentle Stranger should plan to murder Mr. Lesko—to arrange for an accident, where he drowned in the lake.

My father said that the three of us should just run away together and start a new life. Let love reign triumphant! he said.

Oh Simon, my mother said, and she rested her head on my father's shoulder. You're the dearest man in the world, aren't you?

I like happy endings that make me cry, my father said.

Izzie said the problem was that we didn't know who the Gentle Stranger was and why he was there and why he was saved from the dead. If they killed Mr. Lesko, they'd get caught and go to jail and I'd be an orphan. Why should people pay good money to see lives that were more miserable than their own?

Izzie's right, my father said.

I said that maybe the Gentle Stranger had originally come to the lake intending to commit suicide. When he looked into the water, however, he had seen, not his own reflection, but that of my mother, and seeing her eyes, and the love that still lived inside him, he had decided to live.

Max beamed, said we could show that by starting with the scene in the ice house—of them holding hands—and then going to a dream-like flashback by using a piece of fine gauze over the lens, of the Gentle Stranger staring at my mother's image in the water—her fingers clasped together in prayer, her hands themselves seeming to dissolve, only to reappear suddenly and rise up, as if disembodied, from the depths of the lake.

In addition to which, Izzie said, who would ever believe a square hole in an ice-covered lake was natural? Everyone would think we were tricking them with miniatures and false shots we'd cooked up in the studio.

Karl said the story was getting too complicated, and too expensive. He asked my opinion, and I suggested we combine the two stories: The Gentle Stranger and my mother could still plot to murder Mr. Lesko—but because they were incapable of killing, they could also change their minds at the last minute.

And then, Karl said, just when they change their minds—I got it, I got it!—there can be a terrible accident that kills Mr. Lesko anyway.

Except that, because they planned the murder, I said, nobody will now believe it was an accident, and they'll be made to suffer forever for what they *didn't* do.

Since we were now going to shoot indoors, Max changed to the longest of his three lenses and set the aperture wide open. To make use of the available light, we kept the door of the ice house wide open and set up a clothesline between two trees, a stiff white bed-sheet hanging from it, to reflect light into the house. Later, Karl said, we would tint this part of the film blue, to transform it into night.

Max could mix wonderful colors—gold for dawn, yellow for candlelight, red for fires and war scenes, peach-glow for sunsets—and sometimes, late at night in the old trolley barn we had converted into our studio and home, he would let me bathe the strips of film in dyes, and choose the colors we would use, not just to indicate the time of day, as now, or, by adding to the usual black-and-white stock, to emphasize what was happening—the way we did for battles and weddings—but to create the atmosphere that helped you understand the *feelings* in the scenes: pale blues for sadness, and glowing ambers for peacefulness, and crimsons for passion, and ruby reds for lust, and forest greens for happiness.

What made this so magical for me was that the colors for feelings—unlike the colors for night and war and dawn and fire and sunsets and candlelight—were never fixed. Sometimes emerald green or forest green could show how happy our people were, while at other times it could reveal their fear. Sometimes bathing a scene in indigo or sapphire could let you sense the joy the characters were experiencing, and sometimes it helped you to feel that the actors and actresses were

merely, like the color itself, blue.

As soon as Karl had set the scene the way he wanted, in the ice house, my mother wrapped me in a cloak, like Little Red Riding Hood, and gave me a basket of food, a letter placed at the bottom of the basket, to take to the Gentle Stranger, who was hiding in the forest, waiting for us.

But if you meet in the forest, how would the accident take place on the lake? Karl asked. I told you before—we got a lake, we use a lake.

Okay, Izzie said. This is how it works. We cut through the rope, see? So when he's chasing them through the forest with his horse and sleigh, the rope snaps, the sleigh throws him off flying, and he goes tumbling down the hill into the water.

But we have to figure out how it becomes an accident instead of murder, Karl said.

Maybe it's the opposite of the Red Sea, my father said. Maybe the lake closes shut with ice, and then it opens again and he falls in, splash!

Good, Simon, Izzie said. Terrific. So we chop out a chunk of ice and tow it in, and then we tow it back out. You can show me floating in the lake, face down, in Mr. Lesko's coat and his hat, like I'm drowned, and then the child pokes me with the pike pole, and turns me over and I'll give you a look from under the water that will make people freeze in their seats—!

Izzie began smearing his arms and legs with grease, for when he would be drowning in the lake, and while he did I recalled the first picture I had seen inside my head, with which I had begun our story, of a woman drowning, and I didn't understand how that was to come true any more, since we had changed things and decided that Mr. Lesko would be the one to drown.

As soon as Mr. Lesko found my mother's letter, and read it, he took out his whip. My mother crawled backwards across the snow, to the ice house, her forearm across her eyes. Mr. Lesko's arm came flashing down and I leapt in front of my mother, covering her body with my own. The whip's lash cut into my cheek, and the burning sensation—warm and liquid—felt wonderful.

I had not known that this would happen.

Before my mother could tend to me, Izzie had lifted Mr. Lesko from the ground and was pounding him against the side of the ice house. Mr. Lesko's son lifted a pike pole and tried to stab Izzie, but Izzie saw him coming and stepped aside.

The pike pole rammed into Mr. Lesko's side.

Keep shooting, Karl said. Keep shooting. We'll cut it all up later.

They're cut up now, my father said. He put down his

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accordion and packed handfuls of snow onto the side of my face. Izzie reached inside his coat, pulled out a leather-covered flask, and took a long drink. He shouldn't drink while he works, my father said.

Don't drink while you work, my mother said.

If I need a wife, I'll buy one, Izzie snapped.

Falling into the lake will sober him up, my father said. Everything Izzie does is figured out exactly.

We moved to the top of the hill and Max set up his camera there, first to show us racing through the forest to warn the Gentle Stranger that Mr. Lesko was coming to do him harm—and then to show Mr. Lesko charging through the forest with his horse and sleigh.

We photographed my mother sawing through the horse's reins with a kitchen knife. We photographed us changing our mind, and trying to tie the reins back together, but before we could, Mr. Lesko, believing we were trying to escape in his sleigh, beat us away with his whip.

So we fled into the forest, past Max's camera, and it felt wonderful to run across the frozen ground, holding tight to my mother's hand, my curled tresses flying out behind me, the frigid air kissing my cheek, sealing the blood there.

Izzie put on Mr. Lesko's coat and hat and shoved Mr. Lesko from the sleigh. Mr. Lesko tried to stop him—to tell him he had not finished tying the reins back together—but Izzie knocked him to the ground with the back of his hand.

Izzie rode to a point fifty yards away, then turned back. Max photographed me and my mother slipping down the hill, hand in hand, to the lake. The Gentle Stranger stood in the middle of the lake, waiting for us, but where our camera had been, jagged slabs of ice now floated like small islands. Our plan was to jump from island to island, towards the south end of the lake, where there was a waterfall.

Max could photograph us from the other side of the waterfall and, even though we would be nowhere near the fall, he could foreshorten the distance and make it appear that we were in danger of plunging over, to our death.

Max photographed Izzie, disguised as Mr. Lesko, speeding across the snow in his horse and sleigh. Then he moved his camera back onto the ice and photographed my mother and me running along the shore until we found a place from which to step out onto the ice. The fire on the lake was gone and Max said we had to hurry, for the cold air could cause flashes of static electricity to go off inside the camera.

My mother and I set out across the lake, and we called to the Gentle Stranger.

Izzie started down the hill. I saw that the real Mr. Lesko was smiling, and I called out to Izzie to be careful. The reins! I called. The reins!

It doesn't matter, my father said. You heard Karl. Whether it rains or it snows or it stinks, we shoot.

But it was too late. The reins snapped. The horse buckled, as if its forelegs had been chopped off. It tumbled downhill, crashed into a tree, and kept rolling. The sleigh skidded on one runner, in an opposite direction. Izzie leapt out, but he had not planned to do so at that spot, and though he avoided crashing into a tree, he landed hard, shoulder first, against a boulder, and spun upside down, in a somersault, clutching at his shoulder.

Wonderful! Karl called out through his megaphone. Wonderful! Wonderful!

My father pulled at the rope that was hooked into the slab of ice we were riding on, so that at the exact moment when the horse reached the shore, the ice moved, and the horse fell directly into water, its head cracking against the ice's edge.

I heard a sound come from its neck, like that of a tree snapping in high wind.

In the open water, the blood pooled at once.

Izzie rolled into the water behind the horse.

Mr. Lesko stopped smiling. He held to his side, where Izzie had rammed the pike pole, as if it were only now that he felt the pain. His horse thrashed at the water, trying desperately to climb out, and the more wildly it thrashed, the more the blood in the water foamed.

Oh my God! my mother cried. My God!

She watched Izzie raise his hand, grasping at air, and then sink beneath the water's bubbling skin.

My mother's eyes rolled up in their large sockets. She fainted, and lay across our island of ice, one leg caught under her, her hair trailing in the water.

The Gentle Stranger came toward us, leaping from island to island, as if to rescue me and my mother, but when he got to us, he plunged past, straight into the water, and grabbed for the horse's reins.

From the shore, Mr. Lesko walked into the lake.

Where's Izzie? my father asked, and he cupped his hands around his mouth, and called out: Izzie—! Oh Izzie! Where are *you*?

The horse twitched, as if having convulsions, and its crazed eyes closed. It floated up and rolled to its side.

Izzie rose to the surface. Shit, he said. It's colder than a pair of witch's tits down there.

Suddenly, the horse rose up from the water, above Izzie, as if it were about to fly.

The horse! I cried. The horse!

Izzie turned, but too late, and the horse dropped down upon him with its full weight. Izzie disappeared beneath the horse and the water. The horse had one hoof on our island of ice, but the hoof slipped and the horse fell backwards, its neck catching on a point of the ice, the ice ripping a long gash and stripping the skin

away. As if sprung from a trap, a splintered bone shot through the exposed flesh.

Mr. Lesko waded through the water as if he were walking through brambles.

We have to save them, Max said.

Keep shooting, Karl said. Keep rolling! Don't stop—!

But they could die, Max said. This is really happening.

Luck! Karl said. Sometimes, after you give up all hope, and when you least expect it, you get lucky. Go figure!

Izzie appeared behind us, climbed onto our island. I think the horse is dead, he said.

See? Karl said. When it comes to stunts, Izzie never takes chances. Keep shooting, Max! Only leave Mr. Lesko out of the frame. We can't have two husbands show up in the same scene.

My mother opened her eyes. You're alive, she said to me. You're alive! Thank God.

My mother stood. And you too, she said to Izzie, but when she moved to embrace him, Mr. Lesko, struggling in water where he could no longer stand, snatched at her ankle.

My mother tumbled over the island's edge, into the water.

Wonderful! Karl said.

That wasn't supposed to happen, my father said.

Yes it was, Karl said. Don't you remember what Joey said, about seeing a woman drowning, about the woman and the child holding to the horse, about the horse in the water?

Ah! my father said, and he smiled at me. You're right again.

So I dove into the water to rescue my mother. I saw her dark hair floating through the blood, and I reached out, closed my hands on the hair, but at that very instant the horse rolled up between us, as if it were a huge, hollow barrel, and I found myself holding to its blood-drenched mane.

Mr. Lesko's son was on the shore now, tying a rope to the reins, and pulling. I turned and saw pink water dripping from the corner of my mother's mouth. Izzie was below her now. My mother's eyelids moved up, globes of milk-white gelatin, like those we set before the projector's lens, rolling where her blue eyes had been, and she reached for me. We clung to one another for dear life.

I felt as if my chest were being crushed between walls of thick limestone. Mr. Lesko and his son pulled steadily on the rope, to haul their horse from the water.

My mother's mouth was wide open, and her lips were white, not red. In the camera, I thought, black was white and white was black. In my mother's telescope bag, waiting beside the ice house, there would still be a perfect, red impression of her mouth, on thin tissue, where she had blotted it.

The storm is here, my father said, pointing to the sky. Look!

We have to help them, Max said. They'll get frostbite. They'll lose their toes, their fingers.

Keep shooting, Karl said. It's even better than what the boy saw. It's real!

Then nobody will believe it, my father said.

Max left the camera, grabbed blankets from the ground—the blankets in which he kept his spools of film and his extra lenses—and he rushed toward us.

Make a fire! he said to my father. Make a fire! Quickly.

Karl took Max's place, cranking the camera's handle.

If we don't use it now, we'll use it later, he said. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is lost. Nothing, nothing—!

I climbed out of the water. My teeth were clicking like dice. Max wrapped me in a blanket, began rubbing my cheeks with his hands.

You have the heart of a murderer, Max said to Karl. Did you know that?

Don't make me laugh, Karl said. Did I cut the reins? Did I shove them in the water? Did I kill the horse?

Izzie emerged from the water, carrying my mother in

(Continued on p. 77)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Reconceiving the Holocaust?

Steven E. Aschheim



STEPHANIE SHIELDHOUSE

Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust, by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. 640 pp. $30.

The study of the Holocaust is a visceral and cognitive minefield. Poised in our consciousness at the crossroads of history, myth, and memory, no matter how carefully and responsibly constructed the narrative, it elicits the most powerful emotions. Guilt and hate, sorrow, mourning and resentment are never far from the surface. The Shoah raises awesome issues of criminal and moral culpability: It touches on subtle and complex psychological strategies for confronting or repressing an unbearable reality. As our culture's symbol of absolute evil, it has become the site of multiple and contested appropriations, harnessed to rival versions of identity politics, the limit-case in a strange but pervasive cult of comparative victimization. Above all, German and Jewish existence (albeit in different ways), are inextricably defined by it. How the Holocaust is understood shapes, in essential ways, the very identities and self-definition of both groups.

This is the backdrop for the conception and extraordinary reception of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. It is currently the focus of animated, almost obsessive, discussion, attracting a huge readership (on May 12, it stood at 6 on The *New York Times* best-seller list). The lavish praise and popular acclaim as well as the hostility and unease it has evoked can be traced to the same source. For this avowed "reconceptualization" essentially confirms older stereotypical conceptions as to how and why the Holocaust occurred. It is presented—and possesses its appeal—as a kind of "common-sense" history that derides conventional scholarship as somehow naive, misled, and suspiciously self-serving. By viewing the Holocaust exclusively through the prism of a uniquely German anti-Semitism, as the unleashing of a long-brewing national project of "the Germans" (and not just the Nazis), and by shearing it of what he regards as its recent scholarly reductions and evasions into universalizing abstractions ("bureaucratic murder," the "banality of evil," "obedience to authority," and so on), Goldhagen, so to speak, returns the Shoah to the Jews. In effect, he offers a reactive mirror-opposite to the disputed and simplified *Historikerstreit* histories of the 1980s, which sought to relativize Auschwitz into the "normalized" annals of regular human murderousness. His work bears careful scrutiny and criticism.

For Goldhagen, the "Final Solution" is the logical outcome of a peculiarly lethal and singularly German "eliminationist anti-Semitism" that was built into the country's political culture and its social and religious institutions. Already in the nineteenth century the overwhelming majority of Germans accepted this view as their "cognitive model" of the world. With the rise of Hitler, "eliminationist" anti-Semitism almost seamlessly melded into its racist, exterminationist form. The overwhelming majority of Germans either "understood" or willingly engaged in the task of killing the Jews, usually in the most cruel and humiliating ways possible.

The Shoah, Goldhagen argues, cannot be explained merely as the outcome of the policies of a dictatorial Nazi elite. Rather, its roots are to be found within the deepest continuities of German history. As such, it reflected the authentic underlying sentiments and the popular will of the majority of the German nation. Nazism and Hitler merely provided the state-sanctioned legitimation for a popular desire awaiting its proper opportunity.

This is a teleologically reworked version of the *Sonderweg* thesis, in which the peculiarity of German history, its mind and polity, is characterized not by the disjunction between advanced economic development and immature political institutions, not by its illiberalism and late national unification, but almost completely by the persistent, special character of its anti-Semitism. With some, though never really significant, exceptions, "ordinary Germans" either

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supported or became enthusiastic executioners of a "national project." Goldhagen is able to reach these conclusions by leaning upon a vastly more refined and differentiated body of scholarship, which he then either does not acknowledge or summarily dismisses.

That anti-Semitism disfigured, and was profoundly evident in, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany is beyond dispute; that it was deeply bound—as a necessary if not sufficient condition—with the decision to exterminate the Jews is common coin. What is at issue here, however, is not the existence of Jew-hatred but the question of its relative weight as a causal agent amidst a welter of other forces and factors. Goldhagen's rendering of anti-Semitism as a kind of disembodied, autonomous force determining the course of modern German history results in a grossly imbalanced portrait.

To depict Germany as united in its consensual anti-Semitism is to ignore its particularly conflict-ridden, fractious history and the constant attacks upon Catholics, socialists, and liberals that were no less characteristic of this political culture. Goldhagen gives virtually no notice to the generally pro-Jewish Social Democrats—already in Wilhelmian times *the largest German political party*. If German anti-Semitism was as unanimously popular and respectable as Goldhagen asserts, why were the Nazis constrained to *mute* their anti-Semitic rhetoric from 1929-1933? Numerous local studies suggest that ideological anti-Semitism was often the result of being won over to Nazism rather than the cause of the attraction.

To be sure, the conspicuous absence of protest over the measures that gradually excluded Jews from German society, the fear and compliance of life in a dictatorship notwithstanding, also indicates a measure of shameful assent. But why, one wonders, was the "*Endlösung*" kept secret? Even if, as Goldhagen asserts, it eventually became an "open" secret, the authorities continued to do everything to keep it hidden. There is certainly no indication that the genocidal impulse proceeded from the bottom up, that it somehow represented the pent-up fury of an enraged citizenry. If Goldhagen's view is to be believed, the Nazi removal of restraints of violent action against the Jews imposed by various Imperial and Weimar governments should have resulted in spontaneous popular anti-Semitic eruptions, roving bands carrying out Jew-hunts on the streets of Germany. This never happened.

Most tellingly, Goldhagen never discusses the responses of German Jews to this purported omnipresent and monolithic anti-Semitic reality. Had he done so, he would have had to conclude that, from emancipation on, they were spectacularly blind to their surroundings, grandly deluded. It is true that German Jews often idealized German society, omitting many of its less pleasant dimensions. But such idealizations were rooted within a certain, albeit limited, social reality. Indeed, the whole point about the German-Jewish experience, the source of its enduring fascination and unparalleled creativity, lies in its ambiguous nature, the tension between acceptance and rejection. The anti-Jewish impulse was certainly always there, sometimes very powerfully, but if this were all, it would be quite impossible to explain why, for East European Jews, Germany stood as the magnet, the symbol of enlightenment and emancipation so sorely lacking in their own societies.

German-Jewish life was always negotiated in a social field of essentially mixed signals. Side by side with rejection, resentment, and hostility, there was cultural and economic success—and some significant social integration. In 1911, 13 percent of Jewish men and 10 percent of Jewish women had married non-Jews. The figures are more or less double that for the years covering 1919-1933. This does not jell with the picture of a virtually unanimous society of Jew-haters. Even within the brutalized, post-war context of Weimar Germany, it was precisely these mixed signals that proved so confusing to German Jews.

Right-wing political rantings and nationalist agitation proceeded together with unprecedented Jewish success and participation in virtually all areas of life. For anti-Jewish forces, the problem consisted precisely in the fact that, as Peter Gay put it, the outsider had become an insider. It is the combination of integration and assimilation with rejection and hostility that constitutes the denser reality. Even under the Nazis, as Eric Johnson points out in a forthcoming work on the Gestapo terror, it was precisely the mixed messages of the authorities and a degree of *kindness and friendship* shown by various "ordinary Germans" that proved to be *a trap* for many German Jews. History is strewn with such complexities and ambiguities—yet Goldhagen will have none of them.

When Goldhagen analyzes the actual murders, he does have some useful things to say. There may be substance to

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the charge that historians have increasingly tended to marginalize complicity or even tacit support and sublate it into forms of indifference and passivity. Certainly the degree to which the "Final Solution" was (or could have been) known seems to be far larger than recent literature suggests. Although Raul Hilberg already documented this in 1961, it bears repeating that many sectors and layers of German society either supported or were actively involved in the machinery and activity of destruction.

Above all, Goldhagen's shift of focus, although not entirely original, is important. He correctly reminds us that millions of people were murdered outside of the death camps, and that the dominant image of depersonalized, bureaucratic-industrial murder tends to underplay the importance of the perpetrators themselves. Like Christopher Browning before him, Goldhagen demonstrates that many of these atrocities were carried out not by trained, ideological SS fanatics but by "ordinary Germans"—men and women. They did so in numerous police battalions (Goldhagen's description of the scope and scale of their activities is perhaps the most important contribution of the book), in indescribably cruel work camps, and on the death marches where the killings persisted, despite Himmler's late orders to the contrary. Had Goldhagen written a book emphasizing these aspects of the genocide and placing them within a different, more modest, analytic and historical framework, this would have been a far more significant work of scholarship.

The interpretive problem, however, remains and revolves around the issue of motivation. Goldhagen's ordinary "Germans" are explicitly contrasted to Christopher Browning's ordinary "men." Browning posits the murderous willingness of the by-now infamous Hamburg Police Battalion 101 in situational and "human" terms. In his version, anti-Jewish sentiment and stereotypes do play a role. For these murderers, he writes, the Jews "stood outside their circle of human obligation and responsibility." But Browning insists upon integrating this factor into a complex cluster of general situational pressures and dehumanizing mechanisms (group conformity, deference to authority, the dulling powers of alcohol, routinization, and rationalization) that together facilitated the killings.

For Goldhagen, the issue is framed entirely within the confines of a "national" explanation. Germans believed their national cognitive model of the Jews, which the Nazis sharpened by their racist elaboration. When given the opportunity, Germans proceeded to act upon these beliefs. He mentions but never satisfactorily explains the especially vicious murderousness of non-German auxiliaries. In a work that proposes a peculiarly "German" exterminationist anti-Semitism, the lack of serious comparative analysis is particularly regrettable.

But even if we stay with the German case, Goldhagen's monocausal argument cannot be sustained. In the case of the individual field-killers, we have no way of knowing whether their putative anti-Semitism operated as cause or rationalization of their actions. It was, after all, a posture officially encouraged in ever-more brutalized, wartime Nazi propaganda. Goldhagen acerbically dismisses the social psychological factors adduced by Browning as masking the elements of choice and agency entailed in the killings. But precisely because Goldhagen posits anti-Semitism as the single explanatory motivating force (as inaccessible to empirical demonstration as the approaches he criticizes), it is *his* unidimensional psychology that must be deemed mechanistic, less true to the vagaries of human complexity to which the historian must always be sensitive.

What, however, of Goldhagen's evidence that the killers went about their murderous work with voluntaristic gusto and enthusiasm? These men sent gloating, happy pictures home, brazenly advertising their activities; some even brought their wives along. The perpetrators committed genocide with essentially undisturbed consciences. But even if we accept that the murders were committed with relish, the issue of motivation remains unresolved. Saul Friedlander, never one to underestimate the power of anti-Semitism, has argued that the staggering dimensions of the mass murders were also facilitated by a quite unideological state of mind, a form of intoxication (*Rausch*). The perpetrators, he writes, were "seized by a compelling lust for killing on an immense scale, driven by some kind of extraordinary elation in repeating the killing of ever-huger masses of people." There are simply too many instances of such "dionysian" mass murders in history for us to accept a peculiarly German genocidal anti-Semitism as the singular motivating force. During the Spanish Civil War, a distressed Simone Weil wrote incisively of the protagonists:

> I have never seen either among the Spaniards or among the French....anyone who expressed, even in private conversation, repugnance or disgust for, or even only disapproval of, unnecessary bloodshed.... Men ... would relate with a warm, comradely smile how they had killed priests or 'fascists'...whenever a certain group of human beings is relegated, by some temporal or spiritual authority, beyond the pale of those whose life has a price, then one finds it perfectly natural to kill people.
>
> When one knows that one can kill without risk or punishment or blame, one kills; or, at least one smiles encouragingly at those who kill. If one happens to feel some revulsion, one hides it, one stifles it, fearing to be seen lacking in virility. There seems to be in this some impulse of intoxication which it is impossible to resist...I have not found it in anyone. On the contrary, I have seen sober Frenchmen who of their own accord would never have thought of killing anyone—plunging with obvious relish into that blood-soaked atmosphere.

Goldhagen's monocausal "German anti-Semitism" not only fails at the level of the field-killers; it also ultimately narrows and distorts the larger historical context in which these Nazi horrors could become an option in the first place. It is, indeed, only within the setting-up of a new wartime framework, the unprecedented creation of an enabling killing-environment, that the debate over ordinary "men" and ordinary "Germans" makes any sense at all. For the atrocities to occur, Nazism had to provide the warrant for genocide, to officially and radically loosen previously intact taboos (taboos that applied equally to Goldhagen's pre-1933 Germans). It is this great transgressive transformation that characterized Nazism, rendering the *Endlösung* both a thinkable and practi-

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cable proposition. Historians agree that German (and, indeed, European) racism and anti-Semitism, eugenics, and the discourse of degeneration and regeneration were part of the informing background, the building blocks of the Nazi vision. But they also recognize the force of the rupture with the past, which seriously weakens the force of conventional explanatory connections. In their unique ideological synthesis and fanatic determination to implement it, the Nazis created something sui generis.

Certainly demonological anti-Semitism was central to National Socialism; the Jews were consistently its most hated and ultimate victim. This pathology will always require special emphasis. But it is the enabling context in which Jew-hatred was transformed into genocide that is also crucial and left unaddressed by Goldhagen. Nazism's imperial utopia, its propelling dynamic, flowed from its sustaining vision of a "positive" biological politics and a radical racial reorganization of the world, implemented through hitherto undreamt-of large-scale eugenic and interrelated schemes of regeneration and destruction. Only the Jews were obsessively targeted for total extermination, but that operation occurred within a general eugenic framework of German "renewal" and resettlement coupled with exclusionary measures that included mass sterilizations, the killing of the German sick and insane, the mass murder of Gypsies, the virtual extermination of the Polish intelligentsia, the persecution and killing of homosexuals, and, between 1941 and 1944, the deaths of about 7 million civilians in Russia. Goldhagen mentions some of these crimes, but their significance is left unexplored; his explanatory scheme precludes him from setting them into proper context, as part of an ideological continuum of despised and victimized outsider groups. (This is surprising, for in a review written in 1989, Goldhagen correctly castigated Arno Mayer for reducing all of Nazism to anti-Bolshevism and failing to integrate this catalog of crimes into *his* account.) It was not the autonomous strength of Jew-hatred that impelled it to assume its entirely novel, systematically genocidal apotheosis but rather its integration within the implementation of this total, eugenic vision of racial community. The Holocaust must be seen within the context of this continuum—of which it represented the ultimate, extreme edge.

In a laudatory review, Elie Wiesel comments that Goldhagen's work is "driven by the suffering of his people." The graphic, painstakingly detailed descriptions of unspeakable horrors and atrocities indeed evoke pain and focus our anger. The book powerfully taps into this emotional substructure. But Goldhagen should have more carefully consulted a new body of scholarly literature that seeks not to indulge but harness such feelings through a concerted and responsible exercise of self-reflexiveness. His never-doubting explanatory framework is fueled by a vilifying mystique of "the Germans." He repeatedly insists that "the study of Germans and their anti-Semitism before and during the Nazi period must be approached as an anthropologist would a previously unencountered preliterate people and their beliefs, leaving behind especially the preconception that Germans were in every ideational realm just like our ideal notion of ourselves."

This distancing comfortably relieves us from recognizing the implication of generally "human" (as well as uniquely German) propensities in the cruelties. But, even more important, it signifies a failure to grasp the very heart of the issue: the glaringly obvious fact that Germany was *not* a preliterate or alien but rather a modern, supposedly cultured society fashioned in many ways after our own Judeo-Christian, Enlightenment-humanistic image. The enduring outrage and ongoing fascination, the scandal and the riddle, consists precisely in seeking to understand the penetration of the barbarous within the familiarly cultured, the transgression of basic taboos within the framework of advanced civilization. Generations of scholars and thinkers, many of them Jewish and equally "driven by the suffering" of their people, have thought (and continue to think) deeply and painfully over this issue. They have not reached a consensus, other than the realization that in matters as dense and complex as these humility is of the essence, that closure and certainty are probably unachievable.

The refining task of scholarship is surely to call into question rather than reinforce stereotypical thinking and to encourage balanced and complex historical judgments *on all sides*. Goldhagen's book does not help in this endeavor. His "reconceptualization" of the Holocaust is as much a reflection of our own times as it is a history of the Germans and the crimes they perpetrated. This is the source of its success—and its failure. □

The Book of Love

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, by Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, Afterword by Robert Alter. Random House, 1995. 253 pp. $27.50.

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, a member of TIKKUN*'s editorial board, teaches comparative Jewish literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is completing a study of exile and homecoming in the modern Jewish imagination.*

If every new translation of a "canonic" text is an index of the shifting values of the dominant culture and its dynamic encounters with the past, every new translation of the Bible in monotheistic cultures is a barometer of changes at the culture's very core. Once the vernacular shadow-text has become deeply inscribed in the mnemonics of local culture, it cannot be reshaped without signifying a rupture in the process of transmission.

In the English-speaking world dominated by Protestant-accented versions of the Bible, the Kingdom of Heaven has been mediated by the King's English for nearly four hundred years. "Goodness and mercy" may no longer be adequate as a late twentieth-century equivalent of "*tov vahesed*," but they have so congealed in the English-speaking mind raised on the King James Psalter that they take on a life of their own, even after other, more colloquial,

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versions have been made available. John Hollander reminds us that the American schoolgirl's deformation of the penultimate verse of the KJV Psalm 23—"Surely good Mrs. Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life"—suggests that she is "getting *something* more profoundly right about the line, the psalm, and poetry in general than any of her correctly parroting schoolmates. For the 'mistake' personifies the *tov vachesed* of the Hebrew as a beneficent pursuer....The child rightly attended to the trope set up by the intense verb 'follow me' and supplied an appropriate subject for it, thereby turning mechanical allegory into poetic truth." If such "misconstruals" are the shape of the profound *fore*knowledge of the child/poet, a new translation can have an equally defamiliarizing effect on ears dulled by the drone of repetition.

Literate Jews would of course have read the Hebrew Bible and its Aramaic commentaries in their original languages, mediated by medieval Jewish exegesis. The recent spate of English translations, many of them issued by Jewish publishing houses, reflects a relative decrease in Hebrew literacy and an increase in general literacy in the American Diaspora, parallel to (and, in the case of the new Schocken translation prepared by Everett Fox, inspired by) the state of affairs that induced Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig to undertake their monumental translation of the Bible into German in 1925. It also signals a diversification of the contexts and languages of interpretation in the culture at large and a decrease in the privileged status of the Standard Version of Anything.

If the Hertz *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* and its more tendentious competitors, like the Art Scroll *Chumash*, have been geared mainly to the synagogue, these other translations seem directed equally at the classroom and the living room (and, in the case of the volume under consideration, the bedroom...).

The symptom of a truly free market is not only in that "signifying" can be read as a divine or a narrative (i.e., humanly manufactured) procedure—but in that it can be *both* at once: The new Jewish Publication Society multivolume translation of the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, will authorize but also remain in dialogue with the single-volume edition formatted for the annual lectionary cycle.

One would expect advanced scientific research and modern critical sensibilities to be reflected in varying degrees in the new translations, but there is an additional force that shapes the reconstrual of the Bible in our century: the "recovery" of the place of its enactment and inscription. Put somewhat schematically, if "leaving Zion" after the destruction of the Second Temple entailed creating a hermeneutic apparatus that would make the Scriptures portable, "returning to Zion" some two thousand years later entails the opportunity—and the danger—of regrounding the text in its original space. The opportunity lies in a reconnection with the place itself and the new creative energies that can be released by that encounter; the danger lies in the monstrous forms that a literalization of the text can authorize. How this occasion is (or is not) manifest in contemporary translations addressed to non-Hebrew readers reflects the relation of "peripheral" communities to the "sacred center" no less than the relation of the vernacular to the holy tongue.

Depending on which book and which interpretive community we consider, the process exposes the deepest fault lines in contemporary Jewish culture. "Translated" into a political mandate in certain circles, the Book of Joshua and the Book of Esther have provided prooftexts for a modern reconfiguration of the theodicy of chosenness, the centrality and inalienability of the Land of Israel, and the eternal recurrence of the archetypal enemy.

Yet, there are biblical texts that remain resistant to such manipulation. It is hard to imagine any hideous uses to which *Shir Hashirim*, the Song of Songs, might be put. In fact, it might be quite wonderful if our fundamentalists would apply themselves to a rereading of *Shir Hashirim*, which, taken quite literally, can furnish a license only for *love*. Chana Bloch and Ariel Bloch have provided a translation that, far from fundamentalist, still reaches for some literal place, some original cadence.

The invitation to reground a text of love in Jerusalem, in the real spaces in which it was first imagined, is, as the Blochs claim in their splendid introduction, to restore its original colors and contours from under the patina of centuries of interpretation. And if, like the newly restored figures on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, their colors

appear to be brighter and more dazzling than centuries of gazing had rendered them, it is because what has been revealed is the complex immediacy of a belated but direct encounter.

Shir Hashirim celebrates young, unmarried, unfettered love enacted in private bowers and public spaces; Jerusalem is in full bloom, and so are the lovers. Their love is not exclusive; their song embraces the entire world. As Robert Alter defines it in his Afterword, "the natural landscape, the cycle of the seasons, the beauty of the animal and floral realm, the profusion of goods afforded through trade, the inventive skill of the artisan, the grandeur of cities, are all joyfully affirmed as love is affirmed." In this garden, there is no shame and there is no retribution. In this royal city, we encounter not woman *as* Jerusalem (see Lamentations, Micah), but woman *in* Jerusalem, celebrating her own and her lover's bodies, celebrating nature, bodies-in-nature and bodies-as-nature: "That day you seemed to me a tall palm tree/ and your breasts/ the clusters of its fruit,/ I said in my heart,/ Let me climb into that palm tree/ and take hold of its branches."

The rabbis and medieval exegetes allegorized this landscape so that it could become portable and acclimate to places where vineyards and palm trees might not grow, so that a drama enacted entirely on the human plane could be incorporated into the divine epic. If Jewish and Christian exegesis went so far as to render the Shulamite's two breasts as Moses and Aaron and her navel as the Sanhedrin, if even today translators persist in veiling her face, the challenge of the restorer is to uncover her nakedness.

Yet even as our bias toward "the text" and "the body" comes at the expense of the theological discourse that camouflaged them, we should not overlook the fact that Eros was not completely lost even in those precincts; the immediacy and joy of two bodies delighting in each other became the eros of the *road*, of the mutual longing of God and the people of Israel and the land of Israel. Jerusalem will become re-eroticized in the twelfth-century poetry of Yehuda Halevi, and in the thirteenth-century mystical text of the Zohar. Yehuda Halevi's reappropriation of the metaphors of the body and of nature, seen against the background of the rabbinic limits on the poetic fantasy and visual representation, recreates the immediacy and the urgency of the biblical text. Reconnecting to the object of desire, the medieval poet not only re-eroticizes the journey but dares to anticipate its consummation: "It/ would delight my heart to walk naked/ and barefoot among the desolate ruins/ where your shrines once stood; where/ your Ark was hidden away, where your/ cherubim once dwelled in the inner-/most



chamber..."; "I'd soar on eagle-wings/ if only to mix my tears with your dust./...I shall kiss / and cherish your stones. Your earth/ will be sweeter than honey to my lips."

The poet who heads back to Jerusalem recovers the real journey and the physical world from the formaldehyde of allegory in which it has been both preserved and suspended. Seen from the perspective of the late twentieth century, it is Halevi who began the long return to the vineyards and the gardens, to the alleyways and the gates of Jerusalem. Yet, since the poet himself never arrived, it will take many centuries until that journey is completed. Every translation and every interpretation of the Song of Songs somehow preserved the distance of the reader from the actual scene of love.

The radical change in spatial orientation in our century confronts the translator with a double mandate: To re-materialize the text without making it overly familiar, without relinquishing its exotic lyricism and its poetic strangeness—but also without defamiliarizing it out of the acoustical space in which its scriptural status is maintained. If the "flock of goats bounding down Mount Gilead" had become, over the centuries and in remote places, nearly as mythical as Ezekiel's chariot, it is today an even more commonplace feature of the Jewish imagination than Tevye's cow. The alleyways of Jerusalem have not lost their charm, but they have relinquished something of their magic—a latter-day Shulamith, running through our nights inquiring of the watchmen the whereabouts of her lover, would have to dodge among pizzerias and discotheques as well as vineyards and secret gardens.

Chana and Ariel Bloch have somehow succeeded in their translation of The Song of Songs in effecting a repatriation of the eros of journeys *and* arrivals, of the poetry of longing *and* consummation, without losing the enchantment of the exotic in the familiar landscape. And they are ever cognizant of the price of their success: Language that is strange enough to maintain the exotic and erotic tension, but yet literal enough to register in its topography a return to the center of the biblical universe, must defend itself against the risk of generating a text that is *so* original that it would lack all resonance. (The King James Version, after all, reflected not only Renaissance English and the theological bias of the Church of England, but also a significant medieval Jewish exegetical perspective).

That is where the marriage of poetic translation (Chana) and scholarly commentary (Ariel) becomes so crucial. The connection is not as self-evident as it may at first appear, revealing in subtle ways the cacophonies as well as the harmonies of marriage.

ART BY MAIRAV SALOMON

By invoking traditional commentary as well as comparative linguistics and scientific evidence to support—and at times even to contravene—their translation, the Blochs give a kind of license to the poetic imagination without sacrificing the interpretive networks in which the text travels.

In passages where no compelling scholarly or poetic reason exists to undermine it, the preference is for a resonant translation: "I am the rose of Sharon, the wild lily of the valleys," says the female speaker, and the commentary explains that since neither the "experts on Palestinian flora" nor the commentators agree on the identity of "*habasselet*" and "*sosannah*," "we have kept the familiar 'rose' and 'lily' because of their resonance in the tradition."

After Shulamith was reduced to ashes in German poetry that marked the monstrosity of German deeds in mid-century ("*dein aschenes Haar Sulamith*"—Paul Celan), she reappears in a new role at century's end: "I am a wall/ and my breasts are [as] towers," she says in plain but melodious English. "'*Ani homa/ veshadei kamigdalot*." The voluptuous young woman who has inscribed her body on the landscape and the landscape on her body may be more self-conscious about her metaphors than about her nakedness. She lets us know when she is making poetry. But as much as she luxuriates in imagery, she can also appreciate when a wall is *just* a wall, and breasts just breasts.

The challenge that the Blochs have met so magnificently in their translation and interpretation of the Song of Songs is the one that faces us all in these difficult times: How to continue to write love poetry about and in Jerusalem, to preserve the energy and the eros of desire, and to keep it separate from the pragmatic rewriting of the map of this city. The walled and turreted city the Shulamite has constructed of her body, by calling attention to the value of eros that knows that it is human love and not allegory; of imagery that knows it is symbolism and not sacrament, poetry and not politics, becomes the best guarantee of a reduction of public strife. Only such boundaries will allow the architectural components to coalesce into a seamless cityscape: "'*az hayiti be-'eynav/ kemos'et salom*" is boldly and freely translated by the Blochs as: "But for my lover I am a city of peace." □

Still Superego-Deficient After All These Years?

Maurice Isserman

Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement, by Adam Garfinkle. St. Martin's Press, 1995. 370 pp. $24.95.

In a recent interview, Hillary Rodham Clinton mentioned that, while a student at Wellesley College in the 1960s, her views on the Vietnam War had been profoundly influenced by antiwar activist Carl Oglesby. Mrs. Clinton then unfortunately went on to describe Oglesby as a "Methodist theologian." In reality, as a number of conservative commentators quickly and gleefully pointed out, Oglesby exercised a rather more secular authority in those years—as a leader of Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.).

Adam Garfinkle, a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, is among those amused by Mrs. Clinton's gaffe. "Methodist theologian Carl Oglesby?!," he snorts midway through his study, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, "Did S.D.S. perform baptisms too?"

Well, in a sense, yes, if one accepts the argument Garfinkle presents. In his view, antiwar protest was, at bottom, not about the rights or wrongs of American involvement in Indochina. Antiwar protesters in the 1960s, he argues:

> seemed to need the belief in the equivalent of a moral apocalypse for reasons of personal commitment; the more portentous and dramatic the stake, the more praiseworthy one's dedication becomes and the more unequivocal one's commitment must be....The emotional backdrop of the antiwar movement, the personal catharsis it provided its adherents, and the peer support it could generate go far toward explaining why many second-echelon activists, young and old, often seemed impervious to rational arguments about the Vietnam War or other aspects of U.S. foreign policy...

Or, as was sometimes said in the 1960s, the issue was not the issue.

When I heard Mrs. Clinton's comment, I was impressed that she was able to dredge up Oglesby's name at all, considering how he has been overshadowed in popular recollection of the era by more flamboyant types like Jerry Rubin. Still, the episode serves as a useful illustration of the malleability of individual memory and its pitfalls for the historian. Like many of us, the First Lady would prefer her life story to follow a coherent and uncomplicated narrative line, in which all past beliefs and actions are consistent with her current perspective and responsibilities.

But there's more than one way to rewrite history. Garfinkle describes himself as a "fringe member of the Vietnam generation" who took part in the Pentagon protest in October 1967, which marked the antiwar movement's self-described shift "from protest to resistance." Unlike Mrs. Clinton, Garfinkle's mood in revisiting the moral and political battlefields of his youth is anything but wistful. Whether his regrets contribute to the accuracy of his analysis is another question.

Garfinkle contends that the antiwar protests of the 1960s were "counterproductive." Acting out a psychologi-

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cal agenda that led to the embrace of tactics and positions "deeply offensive" to the majority of Americans, youthful antiwar protesters and their "adversary culture" adult mentors not only "did not help stop the war," but indeed "helped prolong it." The war was a disaster, to be sure, but, as Garfinkle argues, only those afflicted with a deep and abiding rage against their parents and their country could have concluded that it reflected any systemic flaw in American society or foreign policy.

Telltale Hearts concedes that antiwar protesters were "well-intentioned," and neither dupes nor agents of the international communist conspiracy. Although Garfinkle makes frequent use of the term "adversary culture," he does not weight it with the implications of moral deviance or anti-Americanism customary in conservative discourse. In one of his better chapters, devoted to exploring the connection between the antiwar movement of the 1960s and "American traditions of dissent," Garfinkle declares:

> In America's past, fringe forces in politics have intersected continuously ... with mainstream views, and in the main American society is not the worst for it—the abolitionist, suffragette, and labor movements were all, in their origins, far outside the political mainstream, and few Americans today wish to return to a social status quo with slavery, an all-male franchise and no rights for workers to organize and strike.

For the most part, Garfinkle writes in a tone of sorrowful head-shaking, which I find vastly preferable to the self-righteous histrionics characterizing the work of other lapsed Sixties radicals given to "second thoughts," such as Ronald Radosh and David Horowitz.

And his goal is a laudable one. He sets out to challenge what he regards as a politically complacent bias among historians favoring the antiwar movement. The leading books in the field have all been written by authors who sympathize with the antiwar cause. As Garfinkle suggests, these works have, by and large, been committed to the propositions that "the war was unwinnable...and that, despite youthful excesses, the movement did far more good than harm." Those happen to be beliefs I share, but I think a solid conservative critique of the antiwar movement would be useful in keeping us erstwhile peaceniks on our toes.

Unfortunately, this isn't it. For all its reasonable tone and honorable intentions, *Telltale Hearts* turns out to be a sloppily argued, derivative work, riddled with shaky assumptions and factual errors. (Anybody who can write, as Garfinkle does, that author Kirkpatrick Sale was a "former president of S.D.S.," or that members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War "did not have long hair" might show a little humility when ridiculing others' faulty memories.)

Garfinkle argues that a "breakdown in the socialization process" in the 1950s, due in significant measure to the mis-application of Dr. Benjamin Spock's child-raising advice, delegitimized parental authority in the eyes of baby-boomers, with doleful political consequences:

> The rage of student radicals against society was ... often a projection; the real target was their vacillating parents, or if not their parents then the moral vacancies that vitiated their spirits....

This, of course, has a familiar ring. Thirty years ago, Dr. Spock was already a target of conservative ire, both for encouraging "permissiveness," and for his own antiwar activism. Garfinkle is at pains to distinguish his own interpretation from the notion, "long popular on the Right," that "student radicals became radical because dysfunctional personal and family lives led them to take revenge on society." In contrast to such commentators as Stanley Rothman and Robert S. Lichter, Garfinkle does not believe that antiwar protesters were "primarily ... self-hating, psychologically aberrant, or sociopathic." What Garfinkle does believe is that, as a group, they suffered from "deficient superego formation...."

Long-distance mass psychoanalysis is a tricky business. It's hard enough for biographers to sort out the conflicting conscious and unconscious motives of a single subject. When you are trying to put several million people on the couch, it is probably better to err on the side of caution.

Of course, like Garfinkle, I can lay no claim to professional expertise here. But I do remember enough from the single undergraduate semester I spent dispensing tasty little brown pellets to caged rats to know that in order to

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generalize about unusual behavior or states of mind, psychologists usually attempt to establish a valid set of comparisons for what is "normal."

In Dr. Garfinkle's laboratory, however, there are no control groups. Were left-wing students more likely to have come from family backgrounds marked by the presence of "vacillating parents" than apolitical or right-wing students? Don't know. How did they compare in that regard with men who served in Vietnam? Can't say. How about those who came back from the war and joined the protests? Not a clue. The white New Left tended to take ideological cues and rhetoric from the Black movement. Were there any significant differences between the family socialization and psychological make-up of white and Black student activists? No answer. Was Black "rage" in the later 1960s also the product of permissive child-rearing? Umm.... And what are we to make of the fact that the New Left was an international phenomenon, with strong followings in countries as geographically and culturally far-flung as Japan, Mexico, Britain, France, and West Germany?

Garfinkle does manage to pose a question that should be of particular interest to readers of TIKKUN: Why were Jews "disproportionately involved" in the New Left? He has a simple answer:

> Because that group of mostly urban, acculturated Jews was fated to gather the bitter harvest of two generations of sometimes obsessive materialism and assimilation, the casting off of tradition and piety for the salve of liberalism and its assumed powers of protection against anti-Semitism...

He fails to notice, or at least to mention, that long before the parents, and even the grandparents, of the baby-boomers were born, Jews were already disproportionately involved in left-wing radical movements. Perhaps the young members of the General Jewish Workers Bund of Russia and Poland also suffered from deficient superegos. But, if so, I doubt it was a reaction to the "obsessive materialism and assimilation" of their elders. Why should Garfinkle assume that Jewish involvement in the New Left was a product of the decay of parental authority when it seems at least equally plausible to attribute it to deeply-rooted family tradition?

When I think back on the late 1960s, I feel no compulsion to transform Carl Oglesby into a pillar of the Methodist Church: I liked him well enough as one of the more clear-headed political thinkers associated with the New Left. But I'm not without second thoughts and regrets of my own. If it were in my power to rewrite my personal history, I would recast myself as a cross between pacifist David McReynolds and journalist I.F. Stone—two staunch critics of the war who never forgot that the purpose of antiwar protest was to persuade the undecided, rather than to establish the radical *bona fides* of the already committed. Alas, I was who I was—and that made me much less effective than I might have been in opposing a war that, upon mature reflection, I still regard as an abomination. But is Garfinkle right when he argues that the antiwar movement actually prolonged the conflict?

It is worth remembering that the antiwar movement was unpopular from its earliest, most polite, most pacifist days—before the onset of Viet Cong flags, and chants of "Ho-Ho-Ho-Chi Minh!," and all of the other devices that my friends and I had come up with by the late 1960s to marginalize ourselves. Let's face it: Americans don't like messengers bearing bad news. Does Garfinkle think that the abolitionists, suffragists, and trade unionists he praises were ever beloved by the majority of their contemporaries?

The reception received by the civil rights movement in the early 1960s offers a useful comparison. When the Freedom Riders tried, non-violently and constitutionally, to desegregate interstate travel facilities in 1961, a Gallup Poll revealed that 63 percent of the public disapproved of their actions. How can one expect that the antiwar movement would do any better? With hundreds of American soldiers dying every week at the hands of the communist enemy in South Vietnam, there was simply no way that the movement, however responsible and respectable in its actions and rhetoric, was going to avoid condemnation by many, and perhaps most, Americans. That's not to say that it couldn't and shouldn't have done better. But it is also worth remembering that a movement does not have to win majority support to achieve its ends.

Historian George Herring, in his book, *America's Longest War*, offers what I think is the most balanced assessment of the mixed impact of antiwar protests. In a passage quoted favorably by Garfinkle, Herring writes that in "a perverse sort of way, the protest may even have strengthened support for a war that was not itself popular." But Garfinkle—mustering his evidence with characteristic selectivity—leaves out the remainder of what Herring had to say in the same paragraph. The antiwar movement, Herring concluded:

> ...forced Vietnam onto the public consciousness and challenged the rationale of the war and indeed of a generation of Cold War foreign policies. It limited Johnson's military options and may have headed off any tendency toward more drastic escalation. Perhaps most important, the disturbances and divisions set off by the antiwar movement caused fatigue and anxiety among the policymakers and the public, and thus eventually encouraged efforts to find a way out of the war.

Garfinkle has changed his mind since the days he was protesting the war; he now apparently believes (although he fails to present any evidence for this startling assertion) that in the later 1960s the Saigon regime was evolving into a genuinely democratic government, and that with some (unelaborated) shift in military strategy, the United States could have prevailed in the war at an acceptable cost in American and Vietnamese lives. In the end, what he offers is a somewhat kinder, gentler version of the standard right-wing argument, intended to diminish the concerns of antiwar protesters and trivialize their memory.

If Hillary Clinton erred in the direction of a benign nostalgia in her recollection of the 1960s, that's no worse than the alternative offered by Garfinkle, which is to measure the current status of his political sanctification by the distance traveled from his earlier state of sin. I think he needs to talk to a good theologian. Perhaps the Reverend Oglesby could set him straight. □

The Greening of Judaism

James Ponet



MAIRAV SALOMON

Down to Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex and the Rest of Your Life, by Arthur Waskow. Morrow, 1995. 402 pp. $25.00.
Godwrestling: Round 2, by Arthur Waskow. Jewish Lights, 1996. 338 pp. $23.95.

"Clumsy, intuitive, marked by a blunder here and a blemish there, yet powerfully attractive to others who connected with its impulsive energy."

This is how Arthur Waskow describes his first Jewish book, *The Freedom Seder*, an inspired, untutored midrash on the Passover Haggadah, which stirred a generation of politically active and religiously sensitive American Jewish youth from the moment it was published in 1969. More than twenty-five years and several Jewish books later, Waskow is still impulsive and intuitive, still powerfully attractive to many others who have come to recognize him as the leading writer/activist in the "movement for Jewish renewal."

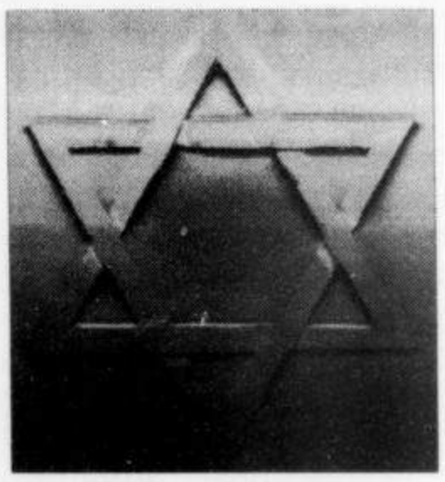
A student of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, whom he describes as "the rarest kind of rebbe—for he creates not clones of himself but independent leaders," Waskow was ordained a rabbi in 1995 "by a committee of one Hasidic, one Reform, and one Conservative Rabbi and a Jewish feminist theologian." He first discovered his passion for Judaism during the Washington riots that broke out after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. He was already thirty-four years old, an author, activist, and family man; it would have been out of character and out of sequence for him to take up, Akiba-style, a protracted apprenticeship. "If someone had insisted that I wait to create until I knew how to steer and to brake, I would have shrugged and moved on...," Waskow comments. So he learned as he wrote, risking errors while making inspired connections between fragments of Jewish tradition and the fraying edges of the American political tradition. "Somewhere within me, deeper than my brain or my breathing, my blood began to chant."

Waskow's two newest books, *Godwrestling: Round 2* and *Down to Earth Judaism: Food, Sex, Money and the Rest of Your Life*, carry this process of learning/teaching another step forward. *Godwrestling: Round 2*, a revision of his 1978 *Godwrestling*, is at turns rhapsodic, confessional, liturgical, and prophetic. *Down to Earth Judaism* functions as its sober, programmatic counterpart. An eloquent if somewhat repetitive handbook, it marks Waskow's attempt to balance his earlier work about the Jewish holiday cycle, *Seasons of Our Joy*, with a blueprint for Jewish living in the day-to-day. It is a worthy companion volume.

While Waskow's emerging theology of radical immanence or pantheism permeates *Down to Earth Judaism*, it is in *Godwrestling* that Waskow allows himself to write freely about his theological "wrestling" and "dancing." Undeterred by Irving "Yitz" Greenberg's famous summons to constrain theological discourse—"No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children"—free of the tortuous, philosophical dialectic that informs the late Joseph Soloveitchik's ruminations on God, untouched by the Freudian despair that permeates the thinking of Richard Rubenstein, the angry edge that cuts through the tenderest writing of Elie Wiesel, and the rebellious, antiphilosophical rage that informs Emil Fackenheim's work, Waskow writes confidently about the birth of a new order: "...some other language that encompasses and transcends modernity is necessary. I propose that this language is God-language. It is God in a new key, with a new Name. For the old God-language was itself transcended, reduced, relativized, by the leap of modernity" (*Godwrestling*, p. 178).

James Ponet is Jewish chaplain at Yale University.

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While his style is personal and informal, Waskow deploys his God-language to build and motivate a constituency, namely that body of non-Orthodox American Jews who want to create "a transformed post-Rabbinic Judaism—feminist, holistic, eco-centered, body-affirming, yet deeply rooted in the Jewish past." Perhaps because he writes to promote his political agenda, Waskow projects a melange of different personae. At times he is a Jewish Walt Whitman, rapturously identified with the whole Jewish people, America, the earth, the biosphere, God. At other times, as he recalls his Baltimore childhood and his coming of age in Washington, he is a nostalgic family chronicler. Sometimes he is recording secretary for Fabrangen, a Washington-based Havurah of which he was a member for many years, reporting the musings, arguments, and insights of its various, usually unnamed, members. (At the end of *Godwrestling*, he addresses his former Fabrangeners: "To all those Fabrangeners who remember those discussions differently, I say: You are right—and so am I.") Sometimes he is a disciple reporting and applying the teachings of Reb Zalman on, say, "the four worlds" or "eco-*kashrut*." At other times, he is a kind of codifier laying out a progressive Guide to Jewish Practice that explains development in ritual as the product of various historical struggles: Bible versus ancient paganisms, Talmud versus Hellenism, Reform-Conservative-Socialist-Zionist Judaisms versus Modernity. And finally, he is a prophet proclaiming a paradigm shift and the emergence of a new ritual, a new ethics, economy, theology, sociology.

Waskow's Judaism of Renewal, a combination of mysticism, activism, deep ecology, and feminism, imagines the earth to be alive yet seriously wounded, humanity to be neither owner nor steward but rather a fully embedded participant in the life of the earth, and the Jewish people to be "a worldwide transgenerational movement to prevent environmental disasters and protect the earth" (*Down To Earth Judaism*, p. 226). Planetary in orientation, committed to celebrating the Unity of All, this Judaism is averse to distinctions and uncomfortable with hierarchy and law. The Talmudic term *mitzvah*, for example, which means "revealed commandment," is translated in a more "feminine" mode as "connection." Thus, the language of blessing spoken before the performance of a mitzvah is rendered, "Blessed is the

One Who makes us holy by connecting us with each other, and teaches us to connect through the rhythm or practice or celebration of ...."

Although he heralds the arrival of this new Judaism, Waskow experiences himself as a fiddler on the roof. "I don't want to go back to the old, closed world—but I do want to dance with the earthquake instead of being buried by it" (*Down To Earth Judaism*, p. 52). Nostalgic for the lost world of the Bundists, the democratic socialists, and the kibbutz of A.D. Gordon, Waskow acknowledges, in the section of *Down to Earth Judaism* that focuses on the meaning and use of money, that "no longer does the ultimate vision of socialism act as a magnet in Jewish life as it did in the beginning of the twentieth century." Socialism, after all, had been the economic theory of a disenfranchised people. But economic, social, technological, and political success has transformed the Jews. "If we are no longer runaways, exiles, victims, do we need to turn the world around? If we are comfortable and well protected, do we want to turn the world around? If not, what is our purpose? Is there indeed a 'we,' a band of us, at all? These are the questions that now face the Jewish people" (*Down To Earth Judaism*, p. 206). In response, Waskow declares that the purpose of Judaism is precisely to save the earth from physical destruction and spiritual barrenness, that what threatens the earth is "all devouring global technology," and that what can save the earth is the embodied Jewish notion of Shabbat, that is, surcease from overwork, overproducing, overbuying, overeating. If Talmudic Rabbis had found a way to protect their Judaism by adapting it to a hostile world, post-modern Jews, Waskow suggests, must now find a way to protect the world by bringing to it a renewed Jewish spirituality.

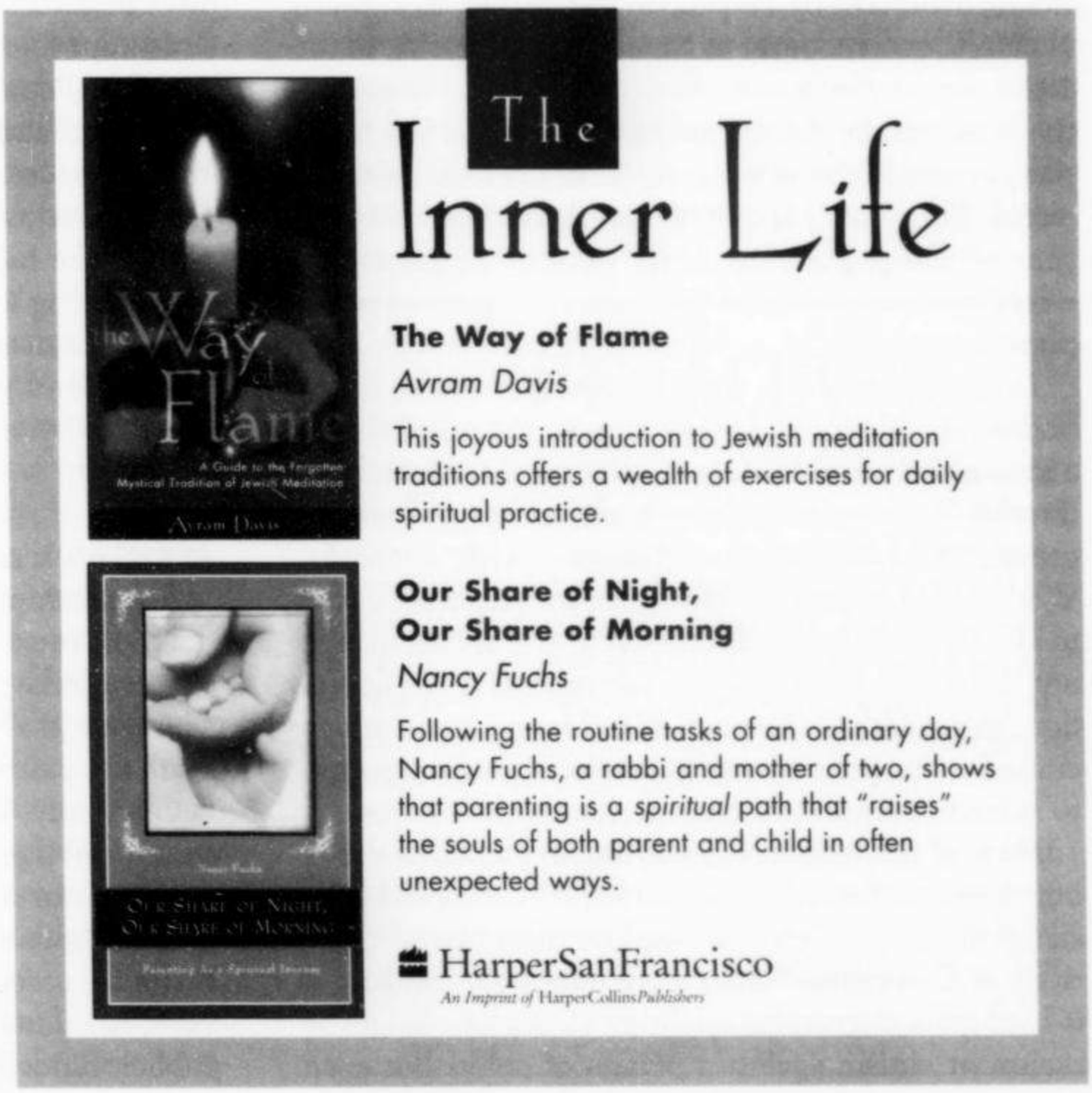
Under the inspiration of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's revisioned Hasidism, the Judaism of Renewal delivers its message in kabbalistic and halakhic language. As American cuisine has absorbed bagels and lox, American English appropriated yiddishisms like *maven*, *shtik*, *chutzpah*, and *schlep*. The American spiritual lexicon today seems singularly receptive to Hebrew phrases such as *tikkun olam*, *shalom chaver*, shabbat, and so maybe to the proposed hybrid term, "eco-*kashrut*." Coined by Schachter-Shalomi in order to assert the relevance of ecological criteria in the determination of a food's dietary status, eco-kosher as term and concept captures the central aspiration of the movement for Jewish renewal. A word fully at home in American English, inside the organized Jewish community "kosher" is a cathected term fraught with political, economic, and social implication, controlled by the Orthodox, challenged in details by the Conservative, and rejected by the Reform. Eco-kosher recovers *kashrut* as a functioning religious category for the whole Jewish people by giving it world relevance.

> What the Eco-Kosher Project implies is that we can strengthen our Jewish distinctiveness and serve the needs of the earth as well; that we can strive to heal ourselves by helping to heal the earth, and help to heal the earth by healing ourselves (*Down To Earth Judaism*, p. 129).

I am moved and edified by the depth and passion of Arthur Waskow's dance with Judaism. Nonetheless, I cannot escape the sense that he takes evil too lightly, that he dismisses law, obligation, and finitude too easily, that he tries to remove the sting from death by focusing exclusively on the "web of life." As he presents the spectacle of the world hovering between the horrors of Auschwitz/Hiroshima barely behind us and an imaginable planetary holocaust looming before us, he lifts himself out of despair by observing that the earth is really God, and God is really good. "Our job is to unwrap the veil to discover that our history is God, our biology is God, our everything is God" (*Godwrestling*, pp. 180-181).

The call to a flowing, pantheistic ethic of connection actually covers over an abyss of despair. If Reality is in fact at war against itself, if the world really totters on the edge of extinction, then Waskow's program makes compelling sense. But if these times are in fact no more apocalyptic than those of any other fin de siècle, then is Waskow's messianism out of place?

To the contrary. Waskow correctly intuits that Judaism is either an urgent response to the crisis of existence, or it is banal and dispensable. That is what the prophets knew and precisely what Hillel taught when he asked, "If not now, when?" □



Let Them Eat Pie

(Continued from p. 19)

delivered her instant response to each speaker before acknowledging the next. I was reminded of the judges at an athletic competition, raising their signs. During lunch I sat next to a program officer who asked how I thought the meeting was going. In reply, I inquired whether they'd ever considered having a disinterested party chair these sessions. "Why?" she wondered.

"Well," I said, "you aren't getting the free and open dialogue the invitation said you wanted. Most of these people get money from Ms. Big, or hope to, and she lets everyone know exactly what she wants to hear."

The program officer put down her fork and faced me, looking amazed. "Do you really think people are tailoring their remarks to her?"

That is what I mean by believing your own propaganda.

The philanthropic culture is rapidly worsening. The polarization of income encouraged by Reagan-Bush-Clinton-era social policies has increased class disparities. According to a recent *New Yorker* article by John Cassidy, the real income of the median wage-earner in this country has dropped by just under 5 percent since 1979, while the real income of the richest five percent rose by 29 percent, and that of the richest 1 percent by 78 percent. According to Edward N. Wolff, an economist at New York University, in the 1920s, wealth (not just income) in the United States was the most equally distributed of any nation's, but today our country is the most unequal in the industrialized world. Forty-two percent of wealth belongs to 1 percent of the population. Sixty percent of growth in wealth between 1983 and 1989 went to 1 percent of the population.

In the '60s and '70s, when income and wealth distribution were flatter and many foresaw the possibility of a near-universal middle class, a stream of fresh air blew through the hermetic culture of philanthropy. Interest-groups of prospective beneficiaries made demands. Women and people of color were consequently asked to join foundation boards and staffs. The appearance (if not the actuality) of fairness emerged as a consideration, particularly at the more liberal foundations, which crafted rules, policies, and procedures that purported to subject applicants to uniform standards of review.

Most of this reform was nothing but window dressing: Asian or Latino program officers can uphold the standards of the class that employs them just as effectively as Europeans—often more effectively, because it is hard for a disgruntled applicant to deploy charges of racism or elitism against a person of color. But even window dressing has its uses. When private funders went public with claims of fairness or equity, it was sometimes possible to embarrass them into making good on their boasts.

All that is over now. In the current political zeitgeist, worldly wealth is taken as evidence of spiritual attainment. We are bombarded with calls to end handouts and return our country to the Edenic state of our hardy forebears. Irate citizens write to "Dear Abby," appalled at witnessing the purchase of birthday cake with food stamps. Like paupers in Puritan times, contemporary have-nots are arrayed in the shame of their failure to achieve wealth, and deserve punishment.

Not long ago, the Republican Congress took steps to weaken nonprofit organizations, described as the organizational equivalent of "welfare queens," gorging at the public trough while daring to nibble the hand that feeds. Legislation proposed that not-for-profit organizations receiving federal funds be prohibited from engaging in advocacy, even on their own money and time. In other words, the price of public subvention should include surrendering free speech. This logic does not extend, however, to the businesses receiving government funds through contracts. The Right doesn't question the entitlement of the military-industrial complex to absorb tax funds far in excess of grants to nonprofits, while maintaining massive lobbying operations to ensure that the river of government gold never ceases to flow.

Except for the hard-Right philanthropies that support The Republican Way, most of the decent and conscientious (and liberal) people who operate the philanthropic sector are as appalled by the new social Darwinism as are their grantees. But that doesn't change the fact that the culture of philanthropy has shifted along with the culture of politics, and the result is that foundations don't have to pretend to be fair, reasonable, and participatory anymore. They baked the pie, and if you want a piece, you had better ask very, very nicely.

There is an aphorism beloved of those who oppose government "handouts": Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; give him a fishing pole, and he eats every day. The philanthropic pie is richly glazed with such glossy rhetoric of "empowerment," but beneath the pastry lurks a nasty surprise.

Obviously, constituted authority and accumulated wealth fear the empowerment of those beneath them. If this were not so, they would eagerly support the initiatives that give ordinary people some control over their destinies: unions; decent, secure shelter and employment; safe food, air, and water; affordable health care; publicly funded elections. Even extending the franchise

is feared by Republicans, who oppose weekend voting or other innovations that promise to increase electoral participation by working people.

Fishing poles come in many forms. To be viable, any field needs infrastructure, including the means to enter into civic and national policy dialogue. Social institutions are shaped by those with the resources and foresight to get involved early. For example, American television is so dismal because free-spending commercial interests entirely dominated its early days. A public interest was asserted much later, leaving room only for the highly imperfect Public Broadcasting System, and now that, too, may be on the way out.

In this country, competition to influence new social forms is fueled by money and markets. People in the nonprofit sector may have the clearest sense of commonwealth, the most visionary ideas of possibility, the soundest memory of historical lessons to bring to such a debate. But without resources to compete with commercial interests, they have little chance to make an impact.

What happened in television is now happening in the burgeoning telecommunications field. A year or so ago, an organization we know applied to a Major National Foundation for support to enter this arena with a public-interest project. The foundation's response was that so many applications for such projects had been submitted that instead of funding any of them, a study would be commissioned. By the time the study is complete and guidelines are in place, commercial interests will have cornered enough ways to exploit the new media for economic gain that they will be able to dominate their future development. As with television, the public interest will emerge in the interstices of the market, few and far between.

David Callahan recently wrote about this problem in The *Nation*, contrasting liberal foundations' anorexic response to policy-related projects with the Right's unabashed largesse in pursuing its policy agenda. He noted that "the left is handicapped in the war of ideas because its policy intellectuals do not have generous patrons." Think tanks and other policy projects articulating democratic public interests are fishing-pole factories, but foundations would rather dole out fish.

Deep, structural analyses of social problems tend to raise embarrassing questions about the right of those on top to construct social policies that enable them to remain there. To many foundation operatives I've met, the thought of marginal and impertinent not-for-profit types asserting their right to carry on dialogue and come up with ideas to counter the Right's dominance is akin to buying birthday cake with food stamps.

The problems of the philanthropic culture demand attention as the dismantling of the public sector continues to elevate private philanthropies to unprecedented prominence. Deference to their studies and pronouncements increases; more organizations look to them for support; and budget-cutting politicians claim daily that private charity can do everything they are denying government the means to do. But beyond accounting to the I.R.S. for their expenditures, private philanthropies are subject to few of the demands for public accountability, participation, or fairness that arise every time a tax dollar is spent.

The solution is not obvious. In principle, it is better for the public sector to tax wealth and distribute social goods by democratic means. Illiteracy, infant mortality, declining wages, and homelessness are some of the intrinsically public problems which must be addressed through the public sector. But I would rather place my bet on a snowball's survival in Hell than on the current prospects for revitalizing our public sector.

There are many ways for foundations to relinquish some of the power that blights the self-serving practice of charity. They can delegate power to autonomous decision-making groups. A lottery system could choose between qualified grantees, dispensing with the whole costly enterprise of justifying essentially arbitrary decisions. The foundations could shift their emphasis from enacting rituals of dominance to preventing poverty, as Maimonides counseled.

But few of those on top are apt to step down willingly; the solution needs to be structural and systemic. No matter how you look at it, getting rich people to pay their fair share of taxes must be a cornerstone of any approach to reforming the philanthropic system. Must we wait for them to volunteer? □

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In My End Is My Beginning

(Continued from p. 11)

Vacant, a victor; Rabin's assassin Yigal Amir voting once with his gun and then first up in the prison line to vote with his ballot? And this dénouement: The future of millions in the Mideast shifted by a few thousand voters.

Just before leaving I go to a typically chaotic Israeli grocery shop, where the owners and the shoppers and the errand boys are all beaming. We think they're dead wrong, yet (what stage of grief is this?), it's fascinating and important to see that they now feel exactly the way many of us did watching the Handshake on the White House Lawn: Victorious. To know that we're now about to face exactly the emotions they've felt these last few years: horror, dread, our world coming apart, existential panic.

I watch as if it's a movie, (if this is denial, it's also an imaginative opening), the odd way I can't feel bad when I see so many on the streets feeling good. For the moment I'm fixated on this turnabout: black turning white, white turning black and thinking that we've missed something, we elite, we privileged, we who always know better. We failed to see how in our arrogance, we isolated ourselves, dismissed the other Israelis. And that's when my mind opens to this insight, for what it's worth: The way I felt diminished by Naomi Chazan is nothing compared to the way the Sephardim (religious and secular), or the Russian and Ethiopian immigrants feel every day. *Inferior. Invisible.* The huge working class is least sympathetic to the Palestinians, since their days are more stressful than ours. The cab drivers, the postal workers, the grocery owners, the disenfranchised are voting not just against peace, but against *us*, and their position in Israeli society. I don't begin to understand all the nuances, but I do begin to get it. It's not only the ideological settlers—they did not swing this election. The *Haredim* and the Russians clinched it, and that's something we didn't anticipate; however democratically, we've elected a heavily fundamentalist Knesset.

Those of us with a social justice agenda for the Palestinians never quite focused enough on the other "others," the Israelis lower down in class, education, possibility, all that we in the peace camp benefit from—we're the ones who infuriate those who work longer hours, who didn't climb up the meritocracy, don't hang out in access to the life of the mind, where we enjoy seeing everything from ten or twenty angles. And Peres is our symbol, the quintessential Ashkenazic intellectual.

My forty-something cab driver doesn't speak a word of English, but whistles all the way to the airport. He's the kind of guy who would usually have music blasting and drive like a maniac. It's hard to convey the poignancy of his soft whistling, the way he's driving as if in a sweet reverie in the dead of night toward my 2 a.m. flight. I feel all the layers that comprise his songs: self-esteem, his world set right, Bibi! When we pull up to Ben Gurion Airport he asks someone to translate: "Tell her that this is the happiest day in my life".

On line at the airport, I learn that the American black-hatted *Haredim* have bought out first class: They've taken all the seats even though they're only four of them. They want no one else to enter that area. (The thought occurs: did they buy this election?) And behind me: two Sephardic guys hug repeatedly, saying: "We did it, we did it, we did it," in a spirit of wild elation. It's only we intellectual types who are, for once, mute.

The business lounge is all Israeli: Voters who came from all over the States are scrutinizing one another, only what we're communicating with our wide eyes is indecipherable, like the proverbial deer in the headlights. There's no small talk, no talk at all. Many of us got no sleep the night before; as I'll learn once on the plane, some here were running news stations or radio channels. Since the final tally isn't in, and since we did not anticipate this and cannot yet digest it, we just stare.

Back in the States, I take a cab from JFK to La Guardia. It's on this ride, on National Public Radio, that I hear Linda Gradstein give the final tally, as Shabbat descends on Jerusalem: "Bibi Netanyahu has just won by 30,000 votes." The next stage of grief begins; I find myself crying, as if I've just heard the news. □

Simplicity

(Continued from p. 25)

experience a meaning famine.

I am not arguing against a full-blown politics of meaning, but I believe that it will not resonate with tens of millions of Americans. Yet, most, if not all, of the policy agenda of a politics of plain living is compatible, or even integral, to a politics of meaning. And this affirmation of a plain living agenda can be expected also to appeal to people with a wide range of social outlooks. What we need today is to open the question, "What is an economy for?" We need a broad consensus in support of a new way of looking at the relationship between the human good and the economic realm. A politics of simplicity not only offers us that vantage point, but it resonates with much of the best in the American experience. □

BULLETS, BOMBS, BALLOTS

(Continued from p. 15)

maximalist and uncompromising. The failure of the so-called soul-searching on the Right following Yitzhak Rabin's assassination suggests that little or nothing has been learned in these quarters, except for the need to camouflage a fundamentally unpopular expansionist program with the magic words "peace" and "security."

All the Left can do now is to take up the role of a dignified opposition, and to say loud and clear what it hesitated to say while it held power: that there is no peace without cost, and that that cost includes handing over substantial amounts of territory and dismantling most of the settlements. It is the Right's vision of peace, not the Left's, that is characterized by wishful thinking and dangerous delusions, but the Left will not be able to make that point until it admits that it shares some of the blame for the fostering of these unrealistic notions, because it delayed telling the whole truth about the costs of peace and procrastinated instead of making the difficult but necessary decisions.

Netanyahu is likely to try to buy time while he revives the discredited dream of "Greater Israel." But the thing cannot be done. There is no going backwards in history, and the attempt to do so will cause an explosion. The brief moment of opportunity for a resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict will pass, and we will be left with another hundred years of war.

There is a terrible historic irony in the fact that, when the Arabs were finally ready to come to terms with Israel, Israel was no longer ready to come to terms with them. But there is no comfort to be had in the fact that, to paraphrase Abba Eban, it is now Israel that never misses an opportunity. □

FICTION

(Continued from p. 61)

his arms. He set her down on the snow, covered her with blankets, put a flask of whiskey to her lips.

Listen, my brave brother, Karl said to Max. Did *you* leap into the water to save them?

The horse lay on its side, blood spilling from its mouth as if a long strip of red film were unfurling from its innards.

Mr. Lesko pried open the horse's teeth and blood shot out onto his face as if pumped from a fire hose.

The horse twitched, pawed the air with its hooves.

Suddenly my mother stood up, as if she were neither wet nor cold nor frightened. She reached under her coat and took out her pistol.

She went to the horse, put the muzzle of the pistol to its forehead, and fired, twice.

Mr. Lesko and his son went down on their knees. They each made the sign of the cross. Above us, the dark clouds were lower than the hills, but less black and ominous—separating and spreading now, as if, like thin, soiled cloth, the sky itself were rotting. Mr. Lesko bent his head, pressed it against the horse's neck, and wept.

Cut! Karl said. Cut! We got it...! We got it...! □

TIKKUN

Literary and Cultural

AWARDS

We will be celebrating our tenth anniversary during the coming Jewish year, beginning in September 1996. One part of that celebration will be the initiation of annual TIKKUN awards for works that have made major contributions to *tikkun olam*, the healing, repair, and transformation of our world. Contributions made in the past ten years will be considered for the first awards, and in subsequent years awards will be restricted to contributions in the previous two years.

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Send to: TIKKUN Awards, 251 W. 100th St., New York, NY 10025

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 4)

its well-financed and successful effort to derail the Clinton plan.

It's no surprise that the A.M.A. preferred to cut a deal with Congress rather than fight for the principle of universal coverage and appropriate public management of a market in which more than four in ten dollars is paid by taxpayers. The A.M.A.—then more powerful than now—prevented the passage of Medicare for almost twenty years, and yielded only after extracting agreement that fees and the sacrosanct doctor-patient relationship would be exempt from public scrutiny, evaluation, and reform.

Much more is needed than restoring that relationship. It's worth noting what the teaching and practice of medicine yielded in the half-century that followed Abraham Flexner reform of medical education and practice:

- A rigid orthodoxy that made allopathic medicine the single legitimate model of "scientific" medicine, excluding or marginalizing all the alternatives;
- Exercise by licensed physicians of an exclusive monopoly control of the healing role;
- Control by medicine of all the occupations that are involved in diagnosis, treatment, and recovery of patients;
- Obsession with the latest technology as the key to solving all medical problems, leading to;
- Overbuilding, overbedding, and overstaffing of hospitals as the workshops that physicians required, fully equipped and adequately manned;
- Specialization creating fragmentation, the reduction of the human being to as many subsystems as there are specialties.

We should not mourn the passing of that model of care. Though its replacement and control by the profit-seeking corporation must indeed be resisted, our efforts should focus not on restoring the patient-physician relationship but on creating a system whose central motivation is preserving and promoting the health of all the people—in their homes, communities, and workplaces. Physicians have a role in such a system, not as masters but as servants of the public good.

Sumner M. Rosen
New York, New York

CORRECTION

The fourth sentence in the last paragraph of "The Balanced Budget Myth" by Frank Riessman (TIKKUN, May/June 1996) should have read: "The counter-strategy calls not only for accepting a higher inflation rate in service of greater growth and employment; it also raises the additional argument regarding the need for stimulation via unbalanced budgets."

ISLAM AND MEN'S SOULS

To the Editor:

Michael Kimmel, in his recent article "The Struggle for Men's Souls" (March/April 1996), used certain terms in a negative context that have religious meaning to Muslims. The Muslim community consists of pious and God-fearing people and not, as you may want to believe, of victims of opportunists who are manipulating the masses' lack of meaning.

In Islam, "*fatwa*" is a religious ruling. *Fatawa* (the plural of *fatwa*) are issued by the *mufti*, the community's top religious scholar. The use of the word *fatwa* to connote a death sentence is inaccurate and perpetuates the idea that Muslim scholars keep themselves busy terrorizing people.

Similarly, Kimmel used the word *jihad* in a negative way. The meaning of the word is "struggle," and not, as it is often translated, "holy war." I can see how the latter translation would be preferred by those who want to marginalize the sincerity of Muslim piety and dismiss the present movement among Muslims for true liberation in many countries as misdirected at best, and satanic at worst. Every day, I put my head to the ground and ask God to make me one of His *mujahideen*. That is, I pray to God to give me the strength to struggle against all forms of evil in the world. This includes keeping myself from straying from God's path, aiding the sick and poor, and fighting tyranny against everyone including Palestinians. In short, *jihad* should not be used as synonymous with war-mongering.

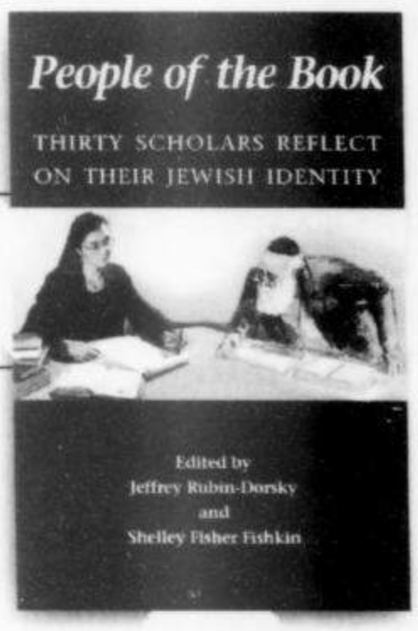
These examples call attention to the broader problem of writing about Muslims in general. My appreciation for TIKKUN is great, yet the writing on Muslims is hardly ever fair or respectful. They are too often portrayed as villains and insensitive zealots. I ask that you extend your sensitivity and analytical insight to Muslims.

Nemr Kanafani
Columbia, Missouri

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Sikkum
Short Reviews of Jewish Books

The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution, by Henry Friedlander. University of North Carolina Press, 1995. 302 pp. $34.95.

The attention garnered by Daniel Goldhagen's book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, has eclipsed this important study by Henry Friedlander, one of the outstanding historians of the Holocaust. Friedlander argues that Germany's euthanasia program gradually but inexorably led to the mass murder of the Jews. First the sterilization program, then the killing of handicapped and otherwise unwanted German Aryan children and adults built the government's machinery that subsequently carried out the Holocaust. Not anti-Semitism alone, but the much larger scope of Nazi racial ideology was responsible for the mentality that led to the murder of Jews, Gypsies, and the handicapped. In direct contrast to Goldhagen's thesis of German exterminationist anti-Semitism, Friedlander argues a very different controversial thesis, and bases it on careful analysis of massive archival evidence. This is a masterful work by a superb scholar.

—Susannah Heschel

Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader on the Northern Plains, ed. by Sandy Rikoon. Translated from the Yiddish by Jacob Catlof and Molly Shaw. Indiana University Press, 1995. 144 pp. $12.95

How do you keep kosher, observe the Sabbath, or circumcise your son while homesteading on the plains of North Dakota at the turn of the century, with your closest neighbors miles away? This extraordinary memoir, discovered in an archive, is the autobiography of a Russian immigrant who arrived in New York City in 1894, where she met her fiancé for the first time. After a few days she moved with him to a tiny shack in North Dakota. For the next several decades, they struggled to survive the desperate conditions of harsh weather, poverty, and near-starvation, and raise their nine children as Jews.

—Susannah Heschel

Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers, edited by Frieda Forman, Ethel Raicus, Sarah Silberstein Swartz, and Margie Wolfe. Second Story Press, 1994. 350 pp. $14.95.

This wonderful collection of short stories by twenty writers encompasses a broad range of writing styles and themes. With a tendency toward the domestic, the stories offer fascinating pictures of private Jewish life. The settings range from Eastern Europe to New York immigrant life to concentration camp experiences.

—Susannah Heschel

The Romance Reader, by Pearl Abraham. G.P. Putnam's, 1995. 296 pp. $21.95.

The fate of teenaged Rachel in the world of the Satmar Hasidim is the subject of this seductive novel. Angry and rebellious, Rachel sees only ugliness and oppression in her surroundings and attempts to subvert the rules enforced by her parents. Although absolutely engrossing, the book is disappointing in the end because it fails to demonstrate the obvious attraction of the religious life for Rachel, or to explain her decision to remain within the community.

—Susannah Heschel

Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing, edited by Judith R. Baskin. Wayne State University Press, 1994. 382 pp. $39.95 cloth, $18.95 paper.

Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing is a testimony to the strength of contemporary Jewish feminist scholarship. Ranging among Yiddish, Hebrew, American, and Latin American literatures, these essays offer vivid and sophisticated introductions to the rich variety of Jewish women's writing, including medieval Ashkenazic women's daily meditations and memoirs; short stories of the shtetl and autobiographical fiction of New York's Lower East Side; polemical essays in American Jewish women's literature from Emma Lazarus to Cynthia Ozick; testimonies of women survivors of the Shoah and vignettes of life in an Argentinean agricultural colony; early twentieth-century Israeli women's poetry; and the recent emergence of the Israeli feminist novel. Not intended to be exhaustive, the collection has some gaps—perhaps the most prominent being Anglo-Jewish women's literature—but *Women of the Word* is a worthy successor and companion to Baskin's earlier collection, *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective* (Wayne State, 1991).

—Michael Galchinsky

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EDITORIAL

(Continued from p. 13)

during the 1996 State of the Union speech that "the era of big government is over"). That may work to restore his popularity temporarily, but don't be surprised if the presidential election is far closer than the current polls suggest, because allegiance bought through this ploy is very shallow. People who feel shamed at having allowed themselves to hope and then be disappointed may feel relief now that Clinton no longer claims that a caring community is possible. Yet, eventually, these same people may sink into a deeper depression and despair that makes them more receptive to a Bob Dole-type politician, whose depressive unconscious may resonate with people's Clinton-generated despair.

Moreover, buying re-election in this way might wind up hurting congressional Democrats who are more fully identified with the hopefulness that "we" can do something together. If there is no such "we," exactly why should people support liberal Democrats when they can instead support conservative tax-cutters? In short, if people no longer believe that it is possible to create a society based on caring and hope, then they will move to the Right politically!

Thus, the Democrats need a politics of meaning far more than they understand. True, some will be able to get re-elected on the basis of personal charm and a history of serving the narrow self-interest of constituents. But as a force that could possibly counter the rightward drift of their constituents, Democrats will be largely ineffective unless they can create a new hopefulness and openness to the values of caring and ethical sensitivity. The politics of meaning offers them, and liberals (now called "moderates") in the Republican Party, a way to do that.

The Greens and other third partyists hope to revive politics by vigorously restating the traditional economistic vision of social democratic liberalism. Millions of Americans agree with Ralph Nader's critique of corporate environmental abuse. But no matter how much they agree, few are likely to jump on the Nader bandwagon, since dealing with these issues is "unrealistic" in an age of cynicism and selfishness. Nader, who declined our invitation to the Summit on Ethics and Meaning, remains deeply enmeshed in a technocratic politics, totally unaware of how people's response to his reforms is shaped by their relative level of cynicism or hopefulness. Until a progressive politics of meaning begins to combat societal cynicism, third-party ventures are unlikely to have much significance (except possibly, in this election, to throw California's electoral votes to Dole).

The worst thing that might happen in the next few months is that Clinton himself might go back to a politics of meaning during the campaign, suddenly reasserting the values that he championed during his last campaign. Doing that could backfire if it reminded people of their feelings of betrayal by Clinton in the past months. Hence, the only politically smart way for the President to reassert those values would be to do so in the context of an "ethical impact report," in which he frankly and fully acknowledges how he has let people down by failing to hold to his ideals, declares that he has recognized this failing in himself, and explains how he has resolved to avoid repeating that pattern of behavior should he be re-elected. This kind of honesty and self-scrutiny might make it possible for people to trust Clinton again, and would be a precedent that would do much to recredit the moral fabric of politics in America.

My point in raising these issues is *not* to suggest a particular direction for how to vote, but to prevent the superficial political analyses that will suffuse the media in the coming months from subverting our deeper understanding of the mess we are in and how we got here. Let us not be accepting of the pundits' facile judgment that the American public is "fundamentally conservative." The fact is that the current conservatism in both major parties is a product of the President's hasty and ill-conceived abandonment of a politics of meaning. □

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14. Overcoming resistances to leadership and supervision
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Each session described above will combine presentation of material with small groups in which people will provide peer supervision as each person attempts to apply the material to some aspect of his or her own experience or current work. Meals will combine food, music, and spiritual teachings from the world's spiritual heritage. All of this will take place in a beautiful country retreat one hour north of San Francisco.

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After the Training: Individuals will receive individual feedback on their strengths and weak spots in being a representative and/or teacher of the politics of meaning—and we will discuss the kind of role that you can play in this movement. Some people will be asked to lead local chapters, others to become involved nationally.

To Apply: Admission is limited. Send a detailed, self-revealing letter about your reason for wanting to be in this training, your reactions to and/or reservations about *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism*, and the areas of the program that most attract you to the perspective and to the training. Let us know who you really are, what your passions are, and what you envision your relationship to the politics of meaning movement and the Foundation to be.

Mail your application to: Laurie Davidson, 951 Cragmont Street, Berkeley, CA 94708

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

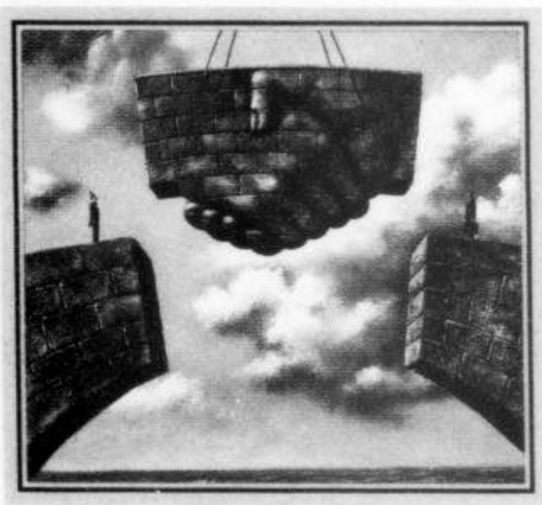
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